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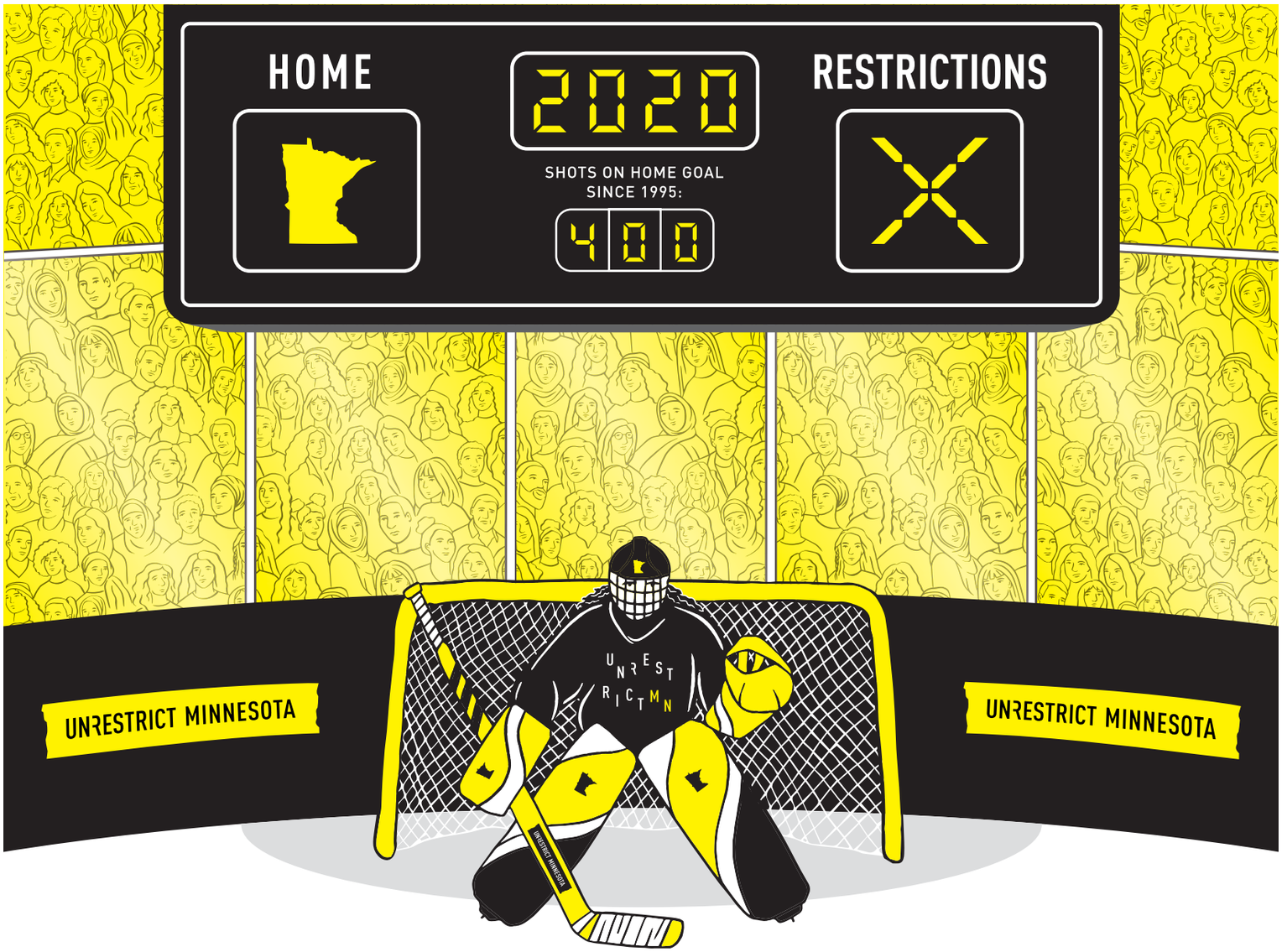
2020 PEOPLE ISSUE



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VOLUME 40 | NUMBER 2043

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ISSN 0744-0456. City Pages is published weekly by Star Tribune Media Company, LLC. City Pages is located at 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. City Pages is available free of charge, limited to one copy per reader. Additional copies of the current issue may be purchased at the City Pages office for $1, payable in advance. No person may, without prior written permission of City Pages, take more than one copy of each City Pages weekly issue. Subscriptions are available for $100 per year. Subscription orders must include check or money order payable to City Pages, and should be mailed to City Pages Subscriptions, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Postmaster: Send address changes to City Pages, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488.

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THE SHORTLIST

See the frisky, whiskered competitors of the 2020 Saintly City Cat Show
citypages.com

SARAH BRUMBLE

THE STAT SHEET

6
$1 million MN lottery winners in the last two months

$30 million
Miguel Sano's just-inked three-year deal with the Twins

42,000
Number of followers @minnesotaduck, the webbed-foot-drumming viral sensation, has on Instagram

0
Confirmed coronavirus cases in Minnesota so far (two suspected infectees tested negative)

"This is the middle of a Venn diagram where the circles are: Victorian era, tiki culture, Paganism, microbreweries."

Reader Marshall Skare responds to "Glensheen Mansion plans to build a giant shark and set it on fire" at citypages.com

ID? IDK.

AFTER MINNESOTANS DEFEATED a 2012 amendment requiring a photo ID to vote, the state's Senate Republicans are pushing for it once again. In a video posted last week, Majority Leader Paul Gazelka says he doesn't think it was "clear in people's minds what actually we were trying to do" eight years ago. Republican lawmakers revisit this fight all the time, but to once again summarize the takes: The pro-ID camp says the change would strengthen "election integrity," while critics say it's actually meant to discourage people from voting, especially those who are low-income or racial and ethnic minorities. One difference this time around is that GOP lawmakers are pushing for a change in state law instead of a constitutional amendment.

POPULAR STORIES
AT CITYPAGES.COM

After three months in Minneapolis, **DALIA AL-AQIDI** wants Ilhan Omar's job

Lawsuit: Forest Lake's **'MR. LARGE BURRITO'** leaves nasty Google reviews

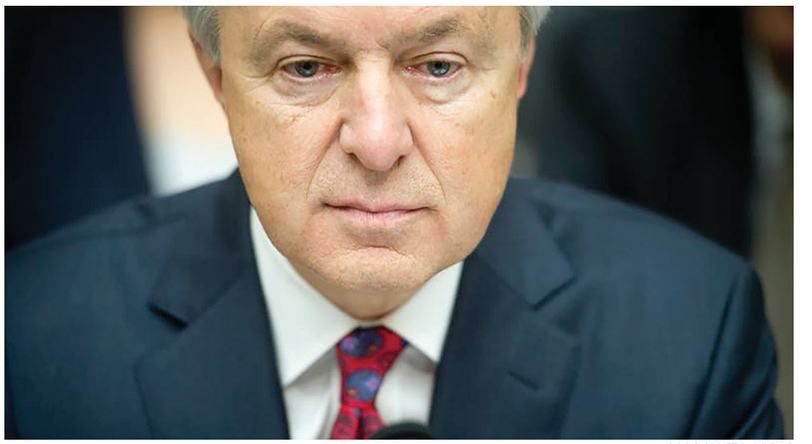
Just **24 PHOTOS** of Minnesotans thriving in the snow

Survey: Minnesota **SECOND-WORST TIPPING STATE** in America

SOUNDSET MUSIC FESTIVAL won't happen in 2020

STUMPFED OUT

Minnesota-born ex-Wells Fargo CEO fined millions, banned from banking



ASSOCIATED PRESS

John Stumpf would often boast about his romantic, folksy background.

He grew up as one of 11 kids on a central Minnesota farm, cut his teeth in community banks, married the local banker's daughter. The company he'd go on to lead, Wells Fargo, with its focus on regular checking accounts for humble folks, carried itself with a similar ethos.

That's what the marketing said. Stumpf's abrupt, scandal-ridden departure in 2016 cut through the folksy miasma.

Wells Fargo workers, under intense pressure to meet the company's sales goals, had been surreptitiously opening new accounts in their customers' names without their knowledge or consent. Millions of phony accounts were opened between 2002 and 2016, including hundreds of thousands of credit cards clients didn't ask for.

This didn't get back to Stumpf immediately. Not before thousands of lower-level staffers—many of whom tried to warn Wells Fargo against this rotten business model—were fired when they failed to meet their sales goals.

But regulators eventually found that blame for the bank's wrongdoing went straight to the top. It was management who had set impossible goals for the staff, management who increasingly pressured employees to meet them or get lost, and management who "fostered an atmosphere that perpetuated improper and illegal conduct."

Stumpf stepped down in 2016 and forfeited his Wells Fargo stock. The bank itself paid out millions in fines and fees. Last week, Stumpf's own bespoke punishment came down in the form of a $17.5 million fine. He's also never allowed to work in a bank again.

Current Wells Fargo CEO Charlie Scharf told the Associated Press the punishments are "consistent" with his belief that "we should hold ourselves and individuals accountable"—and with his belief that significant parts of the way the bank had operated were "flawed."

For a long time, Stumpf touted himself as somehow better than those big-city global investment banks. He became chief executive of Wells Fargo in 2007, right as the nation's finances at large were about to plummet through a worm-eaten foundation of mortgage debt.

His company managed to avoid the worst of the crisis and initially spurned bailout money the other banks desperately needed. He criticized the "plethora" of banking regulations enacted in 2010 as unnecessary hinderances.

Besides Stumpf, other Wells Fargo execs face a total of $37.5 million in fines. Two other bank leaders reached seven-figure settlements with the feds. Stumpf can afford it. In his decade running Wells Fargo, he made $313 million in salary and bonuses.

—HANNAH JONES

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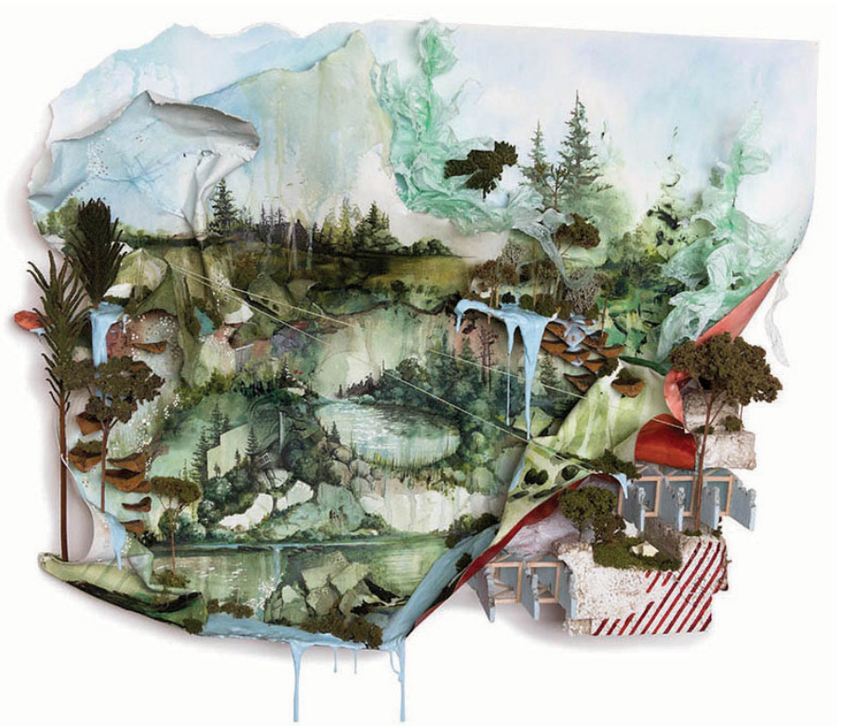

Gregory Euclide (American, b. 1974), *What I Found at the Falls What Cautions Release* on the Land, 2013. Mixed media.

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ANDI SNOW

The Advocate

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

AT A TIME WHEN sex workers have to fight just to be seen as human beings whose sheer existence doesn't threaten anyone else's, walking into City Hall to tell officials their laws are failing to protect the vulnerable requires particular boldness.

Andi Snow—with her fierce eyes and rainbow hair—possesses precisely this tenacity.

Snow is a founding member of Minneapolis' Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP). The small, volunteer-run Twin Cities branch of the national social justice network has been operating for five years, functioning as a collective dedicated to harm reduction, outreach, and community-building.

"Sex work is very isolating, so in the beginning, we were overcome with the feelings," recalls Snow. "[At first] we struggled with how to organize, what we wanted it to be like. Non-hierarchical, consensus-based, autonomous, anarchist organizing is not easy or streamlined, so we went through a lot of stuff where it was very social.

> "There are health and safety hazards all over the place because nobody cares about us."

"I've been an activist and action-minded my whole life, so to me I've been like, 'C'mon, catch up!'" Snow says, waving like a third-base coach before recounting SWOP's flashpoint moment.

Right before Minneapolis hosted the Super Bowl, the city raided all the strip clubs. These raids, followed by a University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) report, revealed a host of workers' rights issues within adult entertainment—which were old news to dancers.

"They didn't find any evidence of [sex] trafficking, but they did uncover some of the real problems that were there," says Snow. "The point is that our carpet is fucked-up, and there are cracks in the stage, and there are health and safety hazards all over the place because nobody cares about us.

"[UROC's] data wasn't very good.... But we read the report and were like, 'There's actually kinda some good stuff in here. *We can do better*.'"

SWOP spent the next two years meeting with city officials, focusing on how to strengthen an ordinance addressing workers' safety without creating unintended consequences for dancers. When the vote came in this past August, City Council members, many of whom arrived dressed head-to-toe in red in support of SWOP's members, unanimously approved the new ordinance.

"It addresses actual health and safety concerns that dancers have, it addresses illegal stuff having to do with contracts and discrimination and favoritism—and my favorite part is that it addresses some of the financial abuses," says Snow. "Primarily it is now illegal for managers to accept tips from dancers, which to anyone who is not a dancer is, like, duh."

With this massive victory in their pocket, Snow sees SWOP's next challenge as communicating the new rights throughout the community. She's currently applying for grant money so SWOP can launch a decriminalization campaign this spring: "I want to invest in ourselves and our community."

Oh, and it wouldn't hurt to find a way to get paid for what has become a full-time advocacy gig in addition to her dancing work.

"Everyone else at the table was getting a salary for being at [those meetings], and we weren't," she says. "And this is the most important shit I've ever done in my life." —SARAH BRUMBLE

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DEBORAH RAMOS

The Community Grower

DANCE, LIVE MUSIC, visual art, food, crafts, a family art-making afternoon—over the last seven years, the Festival de las Calaveras has grown into a multi-day, multidisciplinary celebration of Latinx culture. It spans venues across the Twin Cities and genres from hip-hop to traditional Aztec dance. Some years, it's featured nearly 250 different artists.

And it all grew out of a corn plot in Minneapolis's Central neighborhood.

The festival starts with Deborah Ramos, a Minneapolis-based visual artist who had been traveling to and from Mexico to learn about traditional planting methods. Talking about corn in the U.S. is different than it is in Mexico. "Some would say, 'Corn is as significant as my own life,'" Ramos explains. "It really goes a little deeper than corn flakes."

"As a visual artist, I was kind of feeling the importance of incorporating that newfound information into my work," she continues. So in 2009, Ramos founded the Zenteotl Project—an arm of the nonprofit Tlalnepantla Arts, which she also runs—to engage the community in planting corn. She worked at a public school at the time, and those families—many of them Mexican, Ecuadorian, and Native American—became the first to participate in the new urban agriculture initiative.

Discovering traditional gardening and farming methods, getting back to earth, helped Ramos and the other gardeners feel more rooted, quite literally, in their cultures. An idea emerged: What if they held a concert to create awareness around their community gardening work?

The Zenteotl Project already brought artistry to the garden with traditional dance and sculpture. And they also held an offering—an ofrenda—on the plot. This, Ramos explains, is the basis of Dia de los Muertos: an offering acknowledging ancestors and departed loved ones. The concert was "a way of us extending that offering, which has its origins in corn."

The organization held the first Festival de las Calaveras celebrating the Day of the Dead in 2013—a four-hour, one-night production at the Parkway Theater. Ramos says the outpouring of emotion at that first concert was overwhelming: "We couldn't just not do it again." So they've held it annually since, bringing out a group of people as diverse culturally as it is generationally. There are events big and small: Last year, there was a big concert at La Doña Cervecería, and there was also a family art day at CLUES in St. Paul.

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

"Sometimes it's not like something spectacular is happening, and at the same time, it is," Ramos says. "It's just people coming together to form community in a particular space."

For Ramos, it's important to come here as artists—and as artists with unique backgrounds, from traditional to contemporary, spoken word to hip-hop. "All these juxtapositions are very intentional," she says, so that it's as open as possible to as many members of Latinx and not-Latinx communities, without falling into externally imposed stereotypes.

"But everybody knows that they're invited, and they know what the festival is about," Ramos continues. "And that energy is channeled toward the goal and the purpose. It has a kind of a quantum physics aspect to it, in which we're garnering our energy, galvanizing our energy, and sending it beyond. Doing that through the arts is really powerful." **—EMILY CASSEL**

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MERGES IN MARCH

LOUIS MOORE

The Cyclist

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

NOT LONG AFTER he co-founded the Major Taylor Bicycling Club of Minnesota—a nonprofit riding club geared toward African-American riders—Louis Moore and a handful of other members were riding down Park Avenue when a Minneapolis police cruiser pulled up alongside them. One officer rolled down the window of the squad car, sizing up the group.

"He looked at his partner and said, 'Well, this is a different kind of gang,'" Moore remembers. "Then he laughed, rolled up the window, and drove off."

When Minnesota's Major Taylor chapter (they'd later learn there were clubs named for the African-American cycling champion in cities around the country) got its start in 1999, Moore says, the idea that black people could participate in popular sports was still novel to white folks. A group of Major Taylor-affiliated riders attracted stares when they competed in the Ironman that spring—and not just because of their electric-yellow jerseys. Everyone wanted to know who they were and what they were doing there: "You didn't see very many black people doing these events."

> **"The officer looked at his partner and said, 'Well, this is a different kind of gang.'"**

For the past 20 years, the club has made space for riders of color, teaching cycling skills and spreading the joy of riding to Minnesota's marginalized.

Moore and other Major Taylor members advocated for the very bike infrastructure for which Minneapolis is so lauded today, serving on early iterations of the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Hennepin County Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota. These days, you'll see them at organized rides and at local events like Open Streets. St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter occasionally joins a ride, and they've had everyone from old Minnesota Vikings to Olympic medalists roll with them.

Moore, who at 79 still rides all time, has been president since the beginning. And as chief of staff for former U.S. Rep. Martin Olav Sabo, he's had a hand in all kinds of bike-focused projects, whether he was getting CEOs to install bike facilities on their corporate campuses or developing the Midtown Greenway (and the bridge bearing Sabo's name that elevates the trail over Hiawatha Avenue). Moore's contributions to the Twin Cities cycling community are so numerous that last year, the Bicycle Alliance honored him with a lifetime service award.

But for Moore, the real fun—and the real impact—is in socializing and connecting with other riders. Take Debra Stone, who showed up a few years ago pedaling an old Huffy, wearing cut-off jean shorts and an old-school foam helmet. She'd ride a mile or so and need a break—her clunky, unwieldy bicycle working against her all the way. But the club stayed with her.

"About two or three days later, she calls me and says, 'I'm over at Freewheel on campus, can you come over and help me pick out a bike?'" Moore laughs.

She rode with them the next week and showed up on Wednesdays for the rest of the year. And she went on to help start the Minneapolis chapter of Black Girls Do Bike, a national community of support for women and girls on bicycles with chapters in major cities around the United States—not unlike the Major Taylor Bicycling Club. —EMILY CASSEL

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AUDREY WILLIAMS

The Mothers' Helper

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

IF YOU'RE A SINGLE mother in the Twin Cities looking for help, sooner or later you'll find Audrey Williams.

Usually sooner.

"I received a call from a woman who was taking a bus up from Texas," Williams says. "She overheard two young ladies talking about the services I provided. She said, 'I didn't want to interrupt them, but I needed to have your number.' When I called her back, she started crying. 'I never thought that you'd return my call.'"

Through her organization, Titus Mothers Ministries, Williams provides almost everything single mothers need to get back on their feet. Diapers and wipes. A paid hotel stay when they're homeless, furniture and a household basket "to bless them with" when they find a home. Even budgeting classes.

Williams doesn't so much run an organization as make connections. She publicizes donation opportunities though Facebook groups for various Northeast neighborhoods and her own personal page, and she's never disappointed at the response. "There are a lot of people who want to give, they just don't know how to give," she says. "I'm the mediator between these families."

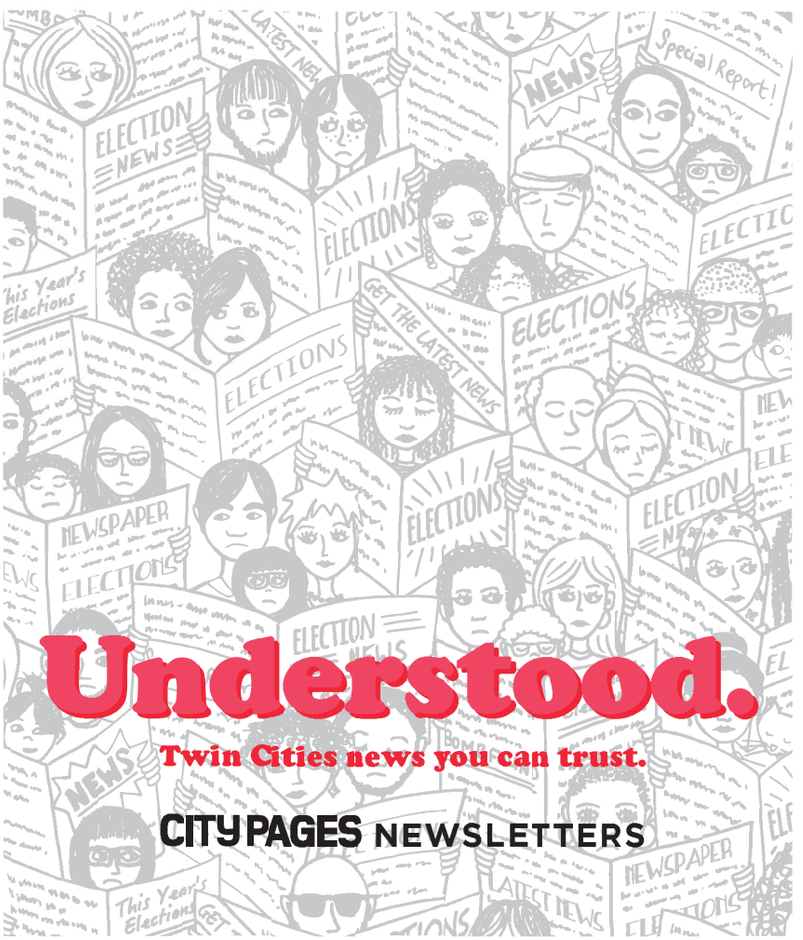
In 2014, Williams, who became a single mother herself at 16, was leading a group for single moms at her church. "A mom came from Florida, where she had been in a domestic abuse situation," she says. "Her son had literally seen his father beat her, so he had PTSD and so did she. She was pregnant and they had nothing but the clothes on their back."

The woman's crisis haunted Williams. "I couldn't sleep. I felt like I had to do something. So I appealed to the community. And before the weekend was out, they piled her apartment with bread and furniture. UPS trucks were pulling in front of my house, providing her and the kids with everything they could possibly need. And that's how it started. People kept messaging me: 'Do you have another family we can help?'"

Williams also sponsors events. A single mothers' Valentine's Day (with no kids allowed) is in its fifth year. She's held a community baby shower for 26 pregnant moms. A back-to-school event rounds up school supplies, and at Christmas she facilitates opportunities to "adopt" families and provide them with meals and toys.

"I do what I do because of my childhood," Williams says. The daughter of two alcoholic parents, she was born in the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago and raised, as she says, "in neglect." Which is why an event that occurred when she was seven was so significant.

"One Christmas, somebody put a box on our doorstep—no name, no address, no anything," she says. "And that box was filled with toys—checkers and blocks—and it shaped my life. Because when we take time to give, the only thing to do is give back." —KEITH HARRIS



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MARIAH WILBERG

The Testifier

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

HALFWAY THROUGH an 18-month sentence in the Shakopee women's prison, Mariah Wilberg sat in front of her fellow inmates and, as part of an exercise in sharing life stories, described what it was like to live with AIDS.

Wilberg had been a 17-year-old runaway. She lived on the streets, selling sex to survive, enduring sexual assault, violent partners, and indifferent police. She was arrested for selling just enough cocaine to the same person on three separate occasions over a 90-day period to justify a first-degree sale conviction. Eventually she contracted HIV. Mortified, she refused medicine and fled to Texas to escape incarceration.

Years later she returned to Minnesota and was sent to Shakopee after being arrested en route to a Christmas party. In prison, she learned her untreated HIV had progressed to AIDS.

By owning her past, Wilberg hoped to take control of her life. Her biggest fear was that other inmates would reject her if they knew her secret. But as she spoke, watching the women's faces closely, she saw their empathy at work. Afterward, people wanted her to know how much they could relate.

"The things I feared didn't happen, and the things I craved, which was support and acceptance, that's what I found. And I said, 'Wow. I have to keep telling my story.'"

She earned early release by attending a six-month prison boot camp. Jobs were elusive when she got out, so she volunteered as an HIV educator, which eventually led to a job at the Department of Health. As a communication specialist there, she led Minnesota to become the third state to recognize how advancements like PrEP can make HIV untransmittable through sex—a medical consensus to which public health policy had to catch up.

Wilberg stumped for drug sentencing reform as well. For selling 1/100th of a gram over the statutory threshold to support her own addiction, she'd gotten a sentence fit for a kingpin when all she needed was someone to pull her out of her tailspin, she testified at the Legislature in 2016. Lawmakers relaxed sentencing guidelines that session.

Since September 2019, Wilberg has been the statewide HIV strategy and services coordinator at the Department of Human Services. Her newest crusade is End HIV MN, an ambitious, multi-pronged state plan to eradicate new HIV infections.

A few months ago, Wilberg graduated from Metropolitan State University with a Master of Public Administration. She continues to volunteer, visiting the Ramsey County workhouse and Shakopee once a month to encourage her friends who remain behind bars.

"It's a bunch of very traumatized women in prison. We're not investing in supporting our most vulnerable community members, but then we invest in incarcerating them, and I'm not okay with that," says Wilberg, who credits her success to society's willingness to reward her hard work with opportunities post-prison—a benefit sometimes withheld from people of color.

"I had an amazing support system to give me second chances. And we need to do that for everyone." —SUSAN DU

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MUKHTAR IBRAHIM

The Witness

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

ONE YEAR AFTER Mukhtar Ibrahim moved to Minnesota at 17, young men started disappearing from Minneapolis only to show up in Somalia at the bidding of the fundamentalist terrorist group Al-Shabab.

Ibrahim was a biochem freshman at the University of Minnesota at the time, studying to become a doctor, yet totally absorbed by the local news.

The mysterious radicalization of those teenagers, which had occurred under the noses of parents and teachers, shone a harsh, interrogative light on his Somali community. For Minnesotans without prior exposure, terror charges and FBI calls for vigilance were their only window in.

At the same time, Ibrahim admired the way some reporters fought to penetrate the authorities' official line and the families' defensive walls to find the heart of the story: what motivated the men to leave, and how their friends and family coped with that choice. He listened as public radio reporters entered mosques and coffee shops to record calls to prayer, the clink of cups, and interviews with regular people. And then, Ibrahim switched his major to journalism and got a job with MPR. He hit the streets door-knocking, begging to listen to anyone who would let him in.

For 10 years, Ibrahim traversed the labyrinthine issue of terrorist recruitment, working from the lonely and oft-misunderstand outpost between his personal ties to the Somali community and his professional duty as a reporter, always striving for greater proximity to the people most directly impacted. Some community members found his persistence suspect. Occasionally law enforcement and courthouse security challenged his objectivity and blocked his access. Those experiences were a trial by fire.

Last summer Ibrahim left the Star Tribune after a turn covering city government to run his own news startup, Sahan Journal. Sahan, which means "pioneer," aims to be a constant witness to immigrant communities' successes, challenges, and transformations—when buildings burn, but also when businesses open.

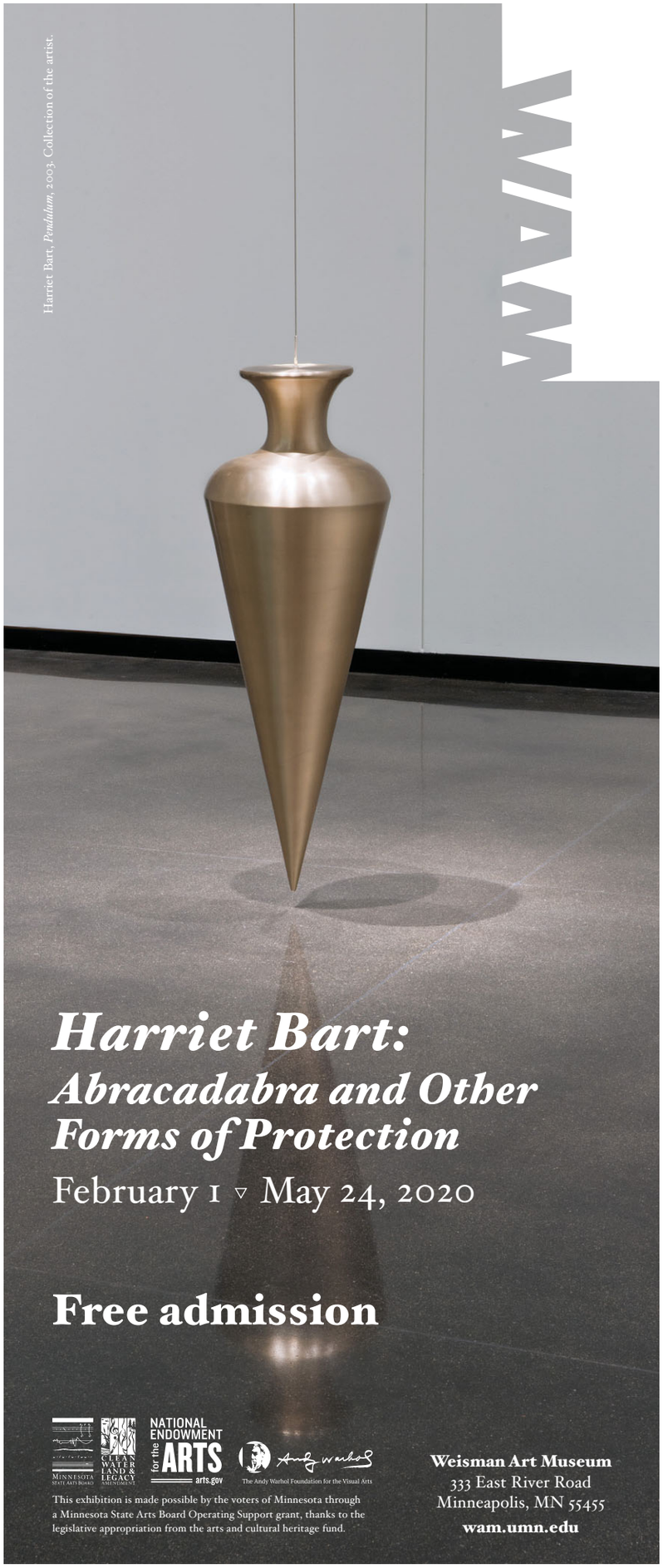
Ibrahim has fundraised enough to hire two reporters and a managing editor this summer.

His advice for the next generation of journalists heading into a hyper-competitive, contracting industry trying to make change through outlets like his: go boldly.

"You're facing this institution that has its own way of doing things, and if you try to change the status quo, you'll be labeled a troublemaker," he says.

"So if you care about some community and you want to write about it, you should go for it. That's how you stand out, with stories that other people aren't writing about. What values can you bring that are missing from these newsrooms?"

—SUSAN DU



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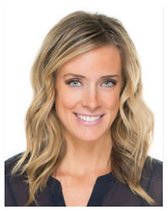

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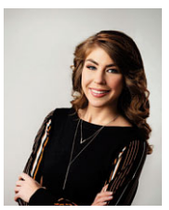

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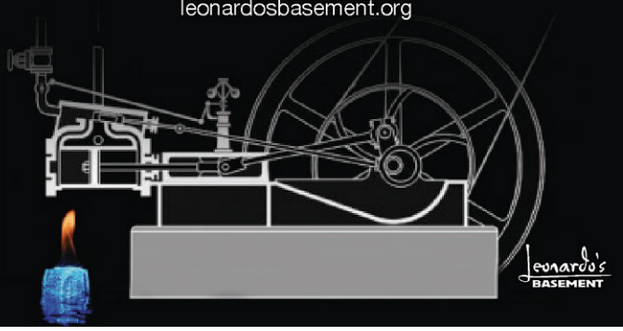

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DAVE COSGROVE

The Historian

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

AS THE DEVELOPMENTAL churn of new cookie-cutter architecture hums along, Twin Cities history buffs are understandably experiencing pangs of nostalgia. Ditto for those lassoed by the endless digital scroll, hoping for a reminder of times when eyeballs weren't beholden to glowing screens.

Saint Paul Revisited offers solace for both.

Launched in 2013 by Dave Cosgrove, the Facebook group is devoted to sharing images and stories of St. Paul's pre-1990 history. It's the sister page to Old Minneapolis, whose admins encouraged Cosgrove to mimic their social media celebration of civic history.

"I wrote to 'em one day and said, 'Would you be offended if I started a St. Paul version of what you're doing?'" Cosgrove says. "They said, 'No that's awesome!' Three days later I had like 5,000 people following it."

St. Paul Revisited currently sits at just under 14,000 followers, well behind Old Minneapolis' 95,000, but its fans are no less passionate. Cosgrove sources his material via deep dives into the archives of the Minnesota and Ramsey County Historical Societies, adding as much context and trivia as he can.

"Hopefully it's something nobody's seen before," says the computer parts worker who devotes five to 10 hours per week to his FB page. "I see the usual people, usually history buffs; there are tons of requests."

Cosgrove, a third-generation St. Paul native, began highlighting local history 10 years ago through Land of Sky Beer Waters, his local beer blog that specializes in old signage and advertisements.

His mission statement for Saint Paul Revisited was concise: "Just to showcase everything that used to be."

That's exactly what the page provides. One recent post reminds followers of the time when Bandana Square, now an office complex in Energy Park, was a pioneering shopping mall. Another shows a classic Hamm's billboard from 1965. A photo of Rodney Niebuh circa 1956, downing 45 cups of milk at the Minnesota State Fair, racked up the "likes."

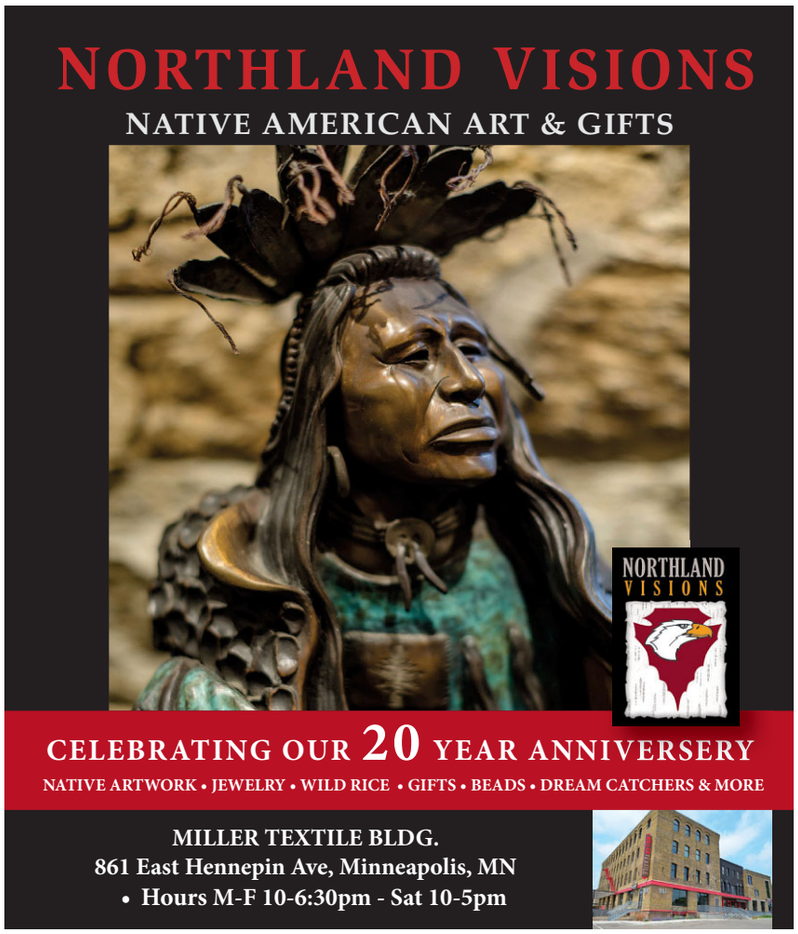
The most popular posts, Cosgrove reports, feature humans, not buildings. One follower even spotted their grandmother in a vintage snapshot. Preservationist messaging is an undercurrent for Cosgrove, who values the inherent integrity of the old-construction properties that still dominate St. Paul.

"I've definitely learned a lot," he says. "There's a lot more to dig up."

Will it be within the pre-'90 framework of the current page? Maybe, though Cosgrove says he's open expanding his historical range. It just might not be what his audience demands.

"People like to see horses and carriages more than Nike high-tops," he laughs.

—JAY BOLLER



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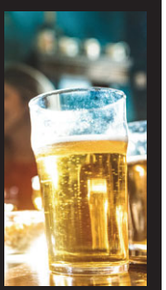

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OSKAR LY, CHRISTINA VANG, AND TEEKO YANG

The Agriculture Artists

SEPARATELY, OSKAR LY, Christina Vang, and Teeko Yang each have impressive portfolios speaking to their respective talents in textiles (Ly), illustration/design/murals (Vang), and photography (Yang).

But together, they're ArtCrop. And over the past three years as a collective, they've drawn attention to the Hmong community's link between farmers and artists, bending the cultural landscape to increase the reach of these interlinked groups for generations to come.

The earliest kernels of ArtCrop were born of St. Paul's original Little Mekong Night Market in 2014. The first version was more of a fusion between Minnesotan farmers' markets and traditional Southeast Asian night markets – and included farmers selling produce.

"It really failed for farmers, actually. People were really into food and things, and some art.... So I was really interested in seeing the intersections between farmers and artists," Ly recalls. "A lot of times in the Hmong community, artists are farmers and vice versa, and it just depends on the seasonality in the year."

Already acquainted through the local arts community, Ly—a self-taught fashion designer who's currently spending six months studying textiles in Thailand—secured grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs' Artists Neighborhood Partnership Initiative, then brought on Yang and Vang to help with ArtCrop's branding and project management. That the pair would become permanent artistic collaborators as well felt natural. Vang was raised in Milwaukee by a family of artists and farmers before pursuing formal art in adulthood, while Yang had lived in the Twin Cities as a kid before moving to an Oklahoma farm with her parents in middle school, all while using art in myriad forms as a means of self-expression.

Vang says that, from the beginning, ArtCrop has had two main focuses. First: that farming and textiles have "carried and sustained Hmong communities for generations, and it's fading away," she explains. "So part of it is, [how do we go about] sustaining that cultural aspect?" Second was discovering different revenue streams for farmers and artists outside the growing season. "Or, y'know, the creating season."

Distilling this heady concept into tangibles has produced multifaceted, multidisciplinary work over the years. An "artshare" delivered intimacy through intentional craft that arrived alongside produce from Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA) farmers in CSA boxes. In 2017, the art took the form of farmers' stories woven into coasters by Ly. The next year, those goods were paired with illustrated recipes from Xee Reiter (who recently created all the art for TPT's Relish series). Last summer, boxes came with hand-poured soy candles from V.Florals in St. Paul, peppered with blossoms from their family's flower farm.

Christina Vang (left) and Teeko Yang. Oskar Ly is studying textiles abroad.

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

At the same time as these art-produce boxes arrived in kitchens city-wide, ArtCrop installed murals at the HAFA farm in Hastings and in St. Paul proper. "A lot of our history, documentation, and art has been erased, or destroyed, or we've had to leave that behind, because of war or fleeing persecution," Ly says. "For us, creating [public] art is about creating evidence, leaving evidence of our communities, of the times that we're in right now."

As they approach growing season once more, Vang admits that their task remains complex—building bridges between agrarian life and art, combating cultural appropriation by building a public visual narrative.... "We're dealing with so many different facets of culture... [But] everything doesn't exist in silos." **—SARAH BRUMBLE**

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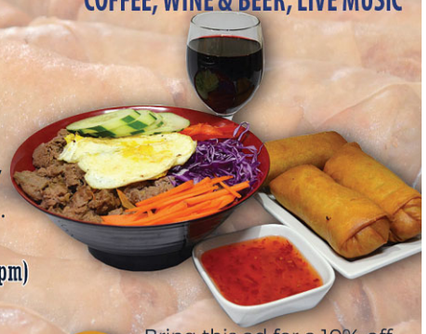

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ZABDIEL LUNA

The Wrestler

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

COACH ZABDIEL LUNA of Shakopee is a man of faith. He says that to be a good Christian is to be a good citizen—and that means more to him than most people.

Luna came to this country as a small child, spirited across the border by his parents. He grew up loved and supported, but undocumented. At 13, he shirked a church dinner only to fall off his bike and bust his wrist. As he sat on the curb, dreading the arrival of the ambulance and the discovery that his family didn't have any kind of health insurance, he wondered briefly if God was punishing him.

Luna was seemingly being punished all his life. When his dad's back gave out and the teenage boy had to stay up at night to shovel snow and support the family. When the fatigue caught up to him and he fell asleep in class. When his grades slipped, when he got kicked out of his high school passion—wrestling—until he got back on track.

He was punished every time he showed up and turned heads at job interviews, only to be given a job application with a blank for a social security number he didn't have. He was being raised in a country that seemingly didn't want him, no matter how hard he worked or how nice he was. The alternative, Mexico, was utterly foreign to him.

But Luna was a good wrestler, and he knew how to hang in there. He muscled his grades back up in time to win state. In 2012, when luck and circumstance got him permission to live and work in the States through DACA, he started working 90-hour weeks to put himself through school. He graduated from Hennepin Technical College and became the first person in his family to get a degree.

Then he became a coach on his old high school wrestling team, recruiting diverse kids and encouraging them to get involved in sports. He later expanded to coaching at Shakopee Middle School West as well. He now has a stable residency via a U-Visa, and he's applying for citizenship.

But one of the most impressive things he's done is come forward about his story—his origins as an undocumented person. Scott County went for Trump in the 2016 election, after months of railing against immigrants and refugees and promising to build a wall on the southern border. After earning a solid reputation in his own community, Luna found many people were surprised to hear where he'd come from.

"They never imagined the things I was going through," he says. "They started to care more about it, you know?"

The more he can get people to care, the better things will be for the next person in his shoes. A good Christian, he says, is a good citizen. And that's exactly what he intends to be. —HANNAH JONES

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LILLY BERNARD

The Eco-Clothier

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

VINTAGE ISN'T JUST a fashion statement to Lilly Bernard—it's part of a bigger movement. For her, it's all about subverting throwaway culture, protecting the Earth, and becoming more aware of labor practices.

"[These things] go hand in hand with vintage," she says. "And there's been a resurgence of women taking care of themselves and taking care of each other. It's all tied in together."

Bernard shares her love of vintage and all of its positive potential through Goodshop Badshop, a Minneapolis-based online business she started in 2017 to showcase and sell her unique finds. Being eco-friendly is a huge part of her mission, as she focuses on finding items made from sustainable and natural fabrics (think linen, cotton, and silk), and uses biodegradable packaging when shipping out pieces. "I really want to have as little of an impact as possible when reselling vintage," she says.

In many ways, vintage and thrifting are the nemesis of fast fashion, a trend Bernard has never really connected with. ("I can't even think of the last time I shopped at a 'real' store... I always felt strange in Forever 21 and seeing so much of the same shit.") These days, she feels like more people are changing their spending habits thanks to increased awareness of the impact mass-produced clothing has on the environment. She predicts even more people will start shunning fast fashion as that awareness spreads.

Goodshop Badshop is part of another growing trend: online shopping. Most of the boutique's sales are made via Instagram, where GSBS has more than 90,000 followers.

"I come from a film and photography background, so that's what drew me into the Instagram platform," Bernard says. "I think a lot of people enjoy shopping on Instagram because it feels like a game, like they've won something. And they are really are winning something... because vintage is really about the hunt."

In the end, she hopes vintage wares and eco-fashion inspire a new wave of self-confidence, self-awareness, and individuality in shoppers.

"I think people are becoming so much more okay with showing themselves and showing more personality and showing who they are," she says. "It seems like a lot of the 2000s was about uniformity, especially here, since it's so utilitarian in Minnesota. I think people are coming out of their shell, and are becoming more conscious of things in general."

As for the future of Goodshop Badshop, Bernard plans to host a few pop-up events in her North Side studio, and she's also working on expanding her website, goodshop-badshop.com, to include photography work and a blog.

—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

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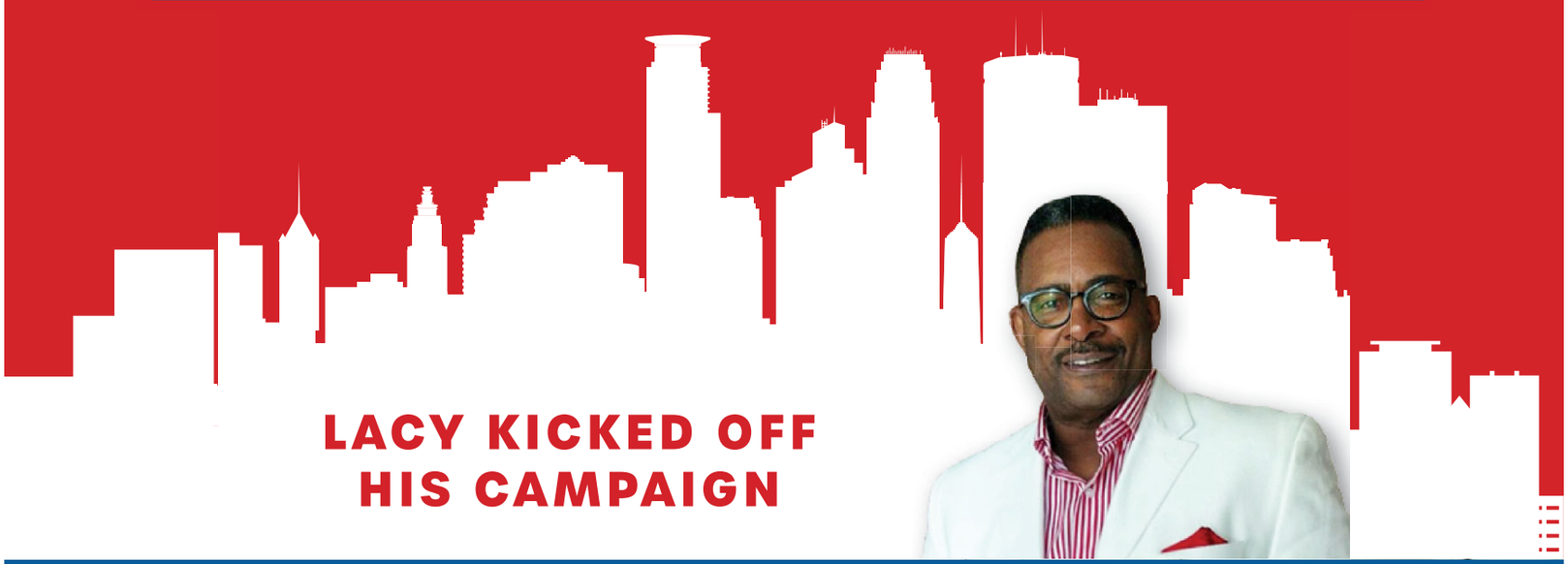

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SAMMY MCDOWELL

The Franchiser

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

SAMMY MCDOWELL attended Minneapolis Community and Technical College for only a few weeks before realizing he already knew everything they were trying to teach him.

McDowell had been experimenting in the kitchen since age seven or eight. As a teen, he turned the hobby into a job at a Kentucky Fried Chicken in Richfield, logging 50-hour weeks, either at the cash register or the fryer. He followed his boss around and peppered him with questions about supplies, keeping the books, scheduling—anything a manager should know.

"When he went up to the roof to change the air filters, I went up to learn how," McDowell says.

At 18, he was promoted to manager, a position he'd hold before and after his brief stint in college. McDowell stayed at KFC for eight years. A job at Wells Fargo didn't feel right, and he went back to restaurants, first running a Subway for five years, then a Jimmy John's for almost 10 more.

McDowell wanted a place of his own. He noticed the "For Lease" sign on a small building next to his north Minneapolis church on West Broadway Avenue. After a talk with the building's owner, McDowell decided he couldn't afford it. But the owner called back—twice—and eventually drafted a more affordable long-term lease. Sammy's Avenue Eatery opened for business in October 2012.

Just barely.

"After I bought everything I needed, I think I had $300 left to buy products," McDowell says. "For those first six months, I was pretty much at the store every day, recouping that same $300."

McDowell did everything that first year, then hired his nephew, and spent another year with the two of them doing everything. The menu was simple, and relied on quality ingredients and fresh preparation, a rarity in the neighborhood.

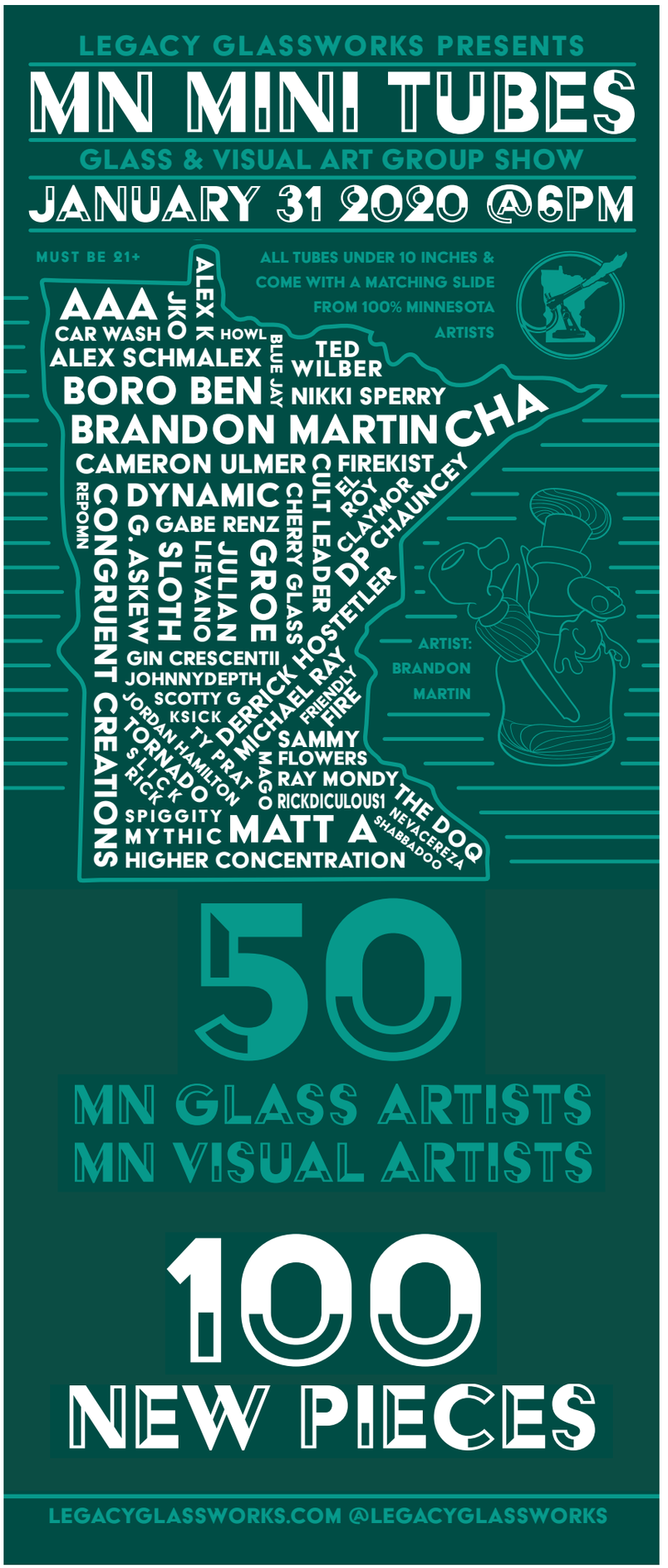
"There were some people who... thought this wasn't for them," McDowell says. "They weren't used to coming to this kind of space."

Friendly service and a top-notch turkey pastrami did the trick, and soon Sammy's was a neighborhood hub. Local power players have been known to turn up at Sammy's—McDowell counts each of the last three mayors as customers—but McDowell welcomes anyone. Twice, he's encouraged guys who were out of work to hang around the shop and meet people. Both found jobs.

McDowell expanded with a second Sammy's last fall, on Central Avenue in Northeast. And that's only the beginning. McDowell is planning three more restaurants, all in North Side apartment buildings in partnership with Devean George, the former NBA player and Minneapolis native who's branched into real estate.

Eventually, McDowell hopes to open "about 20" restaurants across the state. In his dream scenario, each link in the chain would be employee-owned, with McDowell collecting residuals and providing opportunities like the ones he needed.

"I've never been about making a huge income," McDowell says. "I probably could've opened a cafe in the skyway, or in South, or Edina, and made way more money doing same thing. It's about showing people of color, young people, that this is possible." —MIKE MULLEN



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TONY LOPEZ

The Broadcaster

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

WHEN HE COULDN'T find a job in radio, Tony Lopez tried doing it for free.

In 1993, Lopez heard about Radio Talking Book, a state-run program that provides audio programming for the visually impaired. Lopez had tried his hand in broadcasting at Knox College in Illinois and thought a volunteer gig might open some doors in the local scene.

Over the next few years, while he volunteered for Radio Talking Book, Lopez was in and out of other paying jobs. Eventually he landed a promotions and on-air job at the alternative FM station REV 105. Then in 1997, after the station was bought by Disney/ABC, nearly everyone on staff was fired.

Later that year, a part-time job opened at Radio Talking Book. That grew into a full-time gig, with Lopez reading newspapers, magazines, books, and other published works for the station, which broadcasts 24 hours a day and is available only to people with a special radio provided by the state.

Lopez got another chance on mainstream radio in 2005, this time as a host on a new Minnesota Public Radio station called the Current. As one of its original DJs, Lopez—who continued his full-time job at Radio Talking Book—hosted a four-hour weekly show that ran on Saturday afternoons. He played a lot of global music, especially Latin rhythms, and interviewed artists he liked.

But getting his own radio show, something Lopez thought he'd always wanted, meant he spent less time at home with his wife and daughter. He had two choices: a stable position as a public employee with a tiny audience, or a part-time crack at his dream job.

Lopez quit the Current.

"Some nights, when I'm laying in bed, it's something I grapple with," Lopez says. "There's part of me that, yeah, I'd still love to be on regular radio, or playing music. At the same time, I've made a life here, and can't think of doing anything else."

Since 2011, that life has him not only reading on-air, but coordinating the voiceover assignments of more than 100 volunteers. A few are professional actors or broadcasters looking to keep their "instrument in tune." Others just mean well, and Lopez says some have been volunteering for 20 or more years.

In addition to the Star Tribune, Pioneer Press, and New York Times, Lopez scours the internet and local stores for new publications to add to the mix. Once a week, listeners are even subjected to a reading of City Pages. Other content covers science, entertainment, LGBTQ issues, health and wellness, criminal justice, and more. Lopez and his volunteers read the New Yorker, the National Enquirer, and everything in between.

"It's about a sense of connectedness," says Lopez. "I've heard the term 'lifeline' used by listeners before. It's important to not view the blind and visually impaired as people stuck on the couch, not able to connect with the world." —MIKE MULLEN

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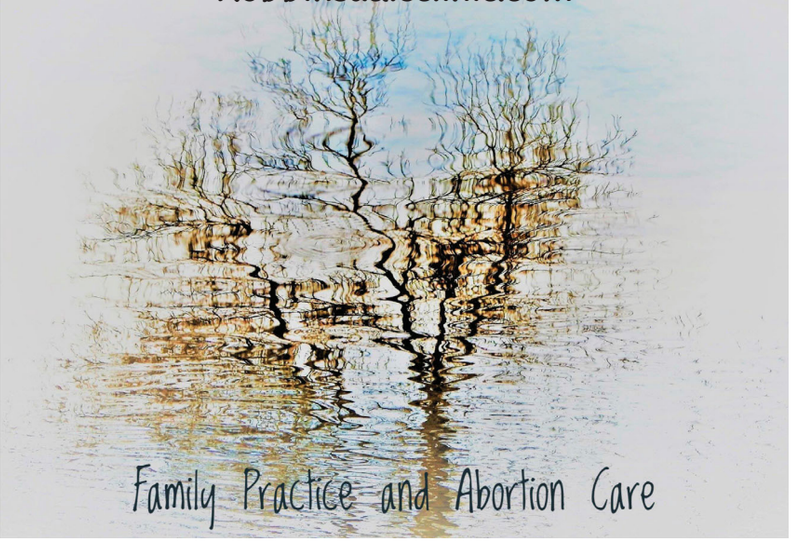

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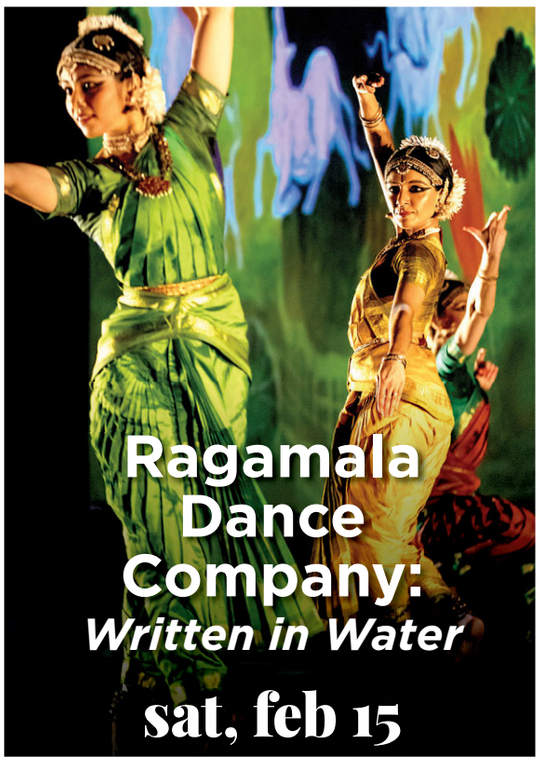

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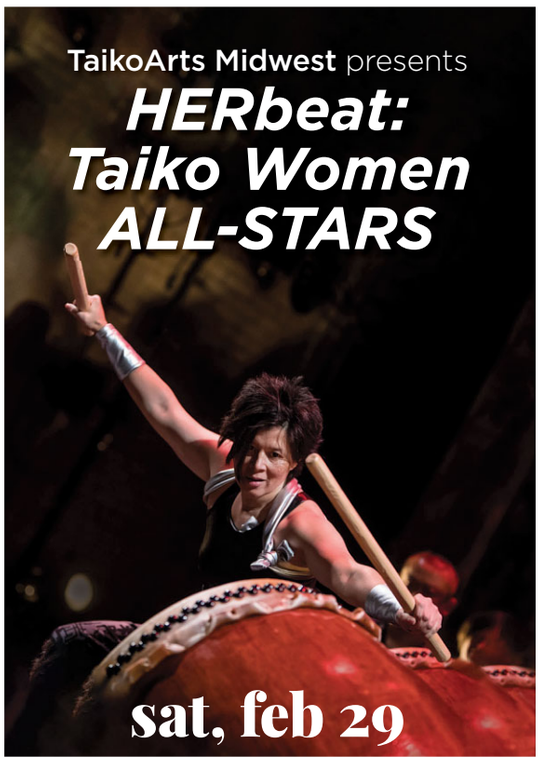

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CYNTHIA QUEHL

The Music Teacher

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

GETTING ELEMENTARY school kids engaged in the arts while competing against social media and online gaming is a huge challenge for teachers in 2020. Cynthia Quehl combats those modern distractions with two of the oldest traditions we have: music and musical theater.

"The music program at Kenwood—where we sing, dance, play instruments, and learn how to listen to music—offers students so many different ways to find their musicianship," says Quehl, who's been the community school's music teacher for the past 14 years. "I am very proud of that."

Quehl also co-directs (with Kathleen Bloom) an annual play put on by their fourth- and fifth-grade students, a beloved production she took over five years ago. They emphasize an all-inclusive environment where every student who auditions gets a role, fostering a strong sense of artistic community among the students. Everyone feels a sense of ownership in the show.

"We usually have a cast of 70 students, plus those who work behind the scenes," says Quehl, making theirs more than double the size of an average school musical. And finding parts, costumes, and props for that many students—not to mention teaching them the staging and choreography, or even just fitting them on a tiny stage—is tough.

But in an era where extracurricular art and music activities are typically the first things to be cut from school budgets, Kenwood prioritizes their after-school arts programs, realizing how those experiences enrich and enhance students' lives.

"Kenwood kids are surrounded by an amazing community that supports the arts and performing in ways that reach far beyond the annual play," says Quehl. Students rise to expectations, gain confidence, and see the value in what they do. What's more, they start to imagine new possibilities. "Teaching in a community that values regular and consistent contact with the arts makes the school come alive, and that is very rewarding."

"Involvement in music and theater helps bring these young students out of their protective shells while encouraging them to discover talents they didn't know they had," Quehl adds. "The biggest gratification for me is the excitement the students feel when they take their bows. They practically levitate."

The lessons will have lasting benefits for students, as they continue to find their own unique voice and distinctive means of expressing themselves. All these qualities are nurtured and encouraged by Quehl.

"I love it when a student takes a risk and surprises us at an audition by showing a singing voice or a sense of drama that they had never shared before," says Quehl. "The opportunity to perform builds confidence in students in a way that can't be replicated. Students also benefit socially and emotionally working as a part of team and learning to understand their own emotions as well as those of their characters. These qualities seem so important and necessary in the otherwise data-driven, right-or-wrong school day of a child." —ERIK THOMPSON

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TES DE LUNA AND JASON HUGHES

The Curators

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

TES DE LUNA and Jason Hughes' introduction sounds straight out of an indie-rock rom-com.

The owners of south Minneapolis record store/art boutique Rock Paper Scissors Goods initially crossed paths in Seattle, where de Luna was a regular at Hughes' Sonic Boom Records. After hitting it off at an Elliott Smith concert in 2000, they went on their first proper date. Eventually, they would run small businesses next door to each other, get married, and have kids.

De Luna, a Minneapolis native who graduated from MCAD in 1999, wanted to move the family back home. So they sold their Pacific Northwest shops and opened Rock Paper Scissors in 2018—a shop that combines their shared love of art and music under one roof.

"We just wanted to use the knowledge from our former shops to start something new," de Luna says. "Starting small in a new city made sense, and we hoped that creative folks would appreciate both art and music."

Rock Paper Scissors brings a much-needed record store to a bustling stretch of Chicago Avenue that's seen a creative resurgence with the revival of live music and film screenings at the neighboring Parkway Theater.

"We really enjoy the neighborhood," says de Luna. "The Parkway has been a really fun addition to the neighborhood, and we have good relationships with a few other small businesses on the block. We love seeing the happy faces come in after a Saturday matinee. We hope the area continues to grow."

The shop also specializes in fine art, handcrafted jewelry, and unique paper goods and gifts, and plays host to monthly gallery shows and art workshops for adults and children.

"Our business supports artists and musicians that make great work," says de Luna. "A lot of our artists are local, but many are from other parts of the U.S. that I've worked with over the years." They also carry goods from several artists and makers that you can't find anywhere else in the Twin Cities.

The shop is still exclusively a two-person operation, which presents the challenge of juggling hours, special events, and workshops with family life. But it also gives de Luna and Hughes the ability to curate and design the shop to their own distinctive tastes and specifications. It means regulars trust their music and gift suggestions, and the classes have been especially rewarding.

"It's also nice to see folks that haven't been creative for a long time due to work or kids or whatever come back to art and see how it sparks their imagination," de Luna says. "Many people have reached out saying that taking a class has inspired them to get back to making art on a regular basis." —ERIK THOMPSON

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DAN COLLISON

The Rebel Minister

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

THE LAST THING Heather and Lisa Albinson wanted to do was make trouble for their church. They'd met and fallen in love at First Covenant in downtown Minneapolis. Both were members of the church band, and they wanted the band leader—a dear friend of theirs—to officiate their wedding. This place was part of their love story. But when they got married in 2014, they decided to do it offsite, just in case.

First Covenant still got in trouble, and so did its pastor, Dan Collison. Though the women hadn't married at the church, Collison had allowed a staff member to perform the ceremony. Furthermore, he had a policy of offering sacraments like baptism to everyone—regardless of race, gender, or sexuality.

That's how Collison has done things for 10 years. His church contains a homeless shelter and a nonreligious arts collective, plus a plan to build affordable housing in the parking lot. Inclusivity and openness are part of his mission. And that's what put him "out of harmony" with the rest of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Five years after the Albinsons' marriage, they traveled to Omaha with Collison to plead their case before denominational leaders. In the end, 75 percent of the assembled leaders voted to kick Collison and his entire church out of the faith. It's the first time in its 130-year history that a minister or a church has been evicted.

Collison was "deeply saddened" by what happened. But it wasn't the end. The downtown church had no debts. It owned its building and its name. The denomination couldn't take those away. So the three of them returned to Minneapolis in order to move forward together as a congregation.

He says even with the "pain" of rejection, their first Sunday back from Omaha felt like "an Easter." There was weeping, joy, clarity—a hard reset. It was time to pick up the pieces and build a church in their own image. A church where everyone would be welcome.

It's been six months since the Omaha decision. About 100 new people have been exploring the congregation—many of them queer. The next year will be about holding meetings, getting to know the new folks, and deciding who they want to be as a church.

"I have done a lot of soul-searching about the failure of the Christian religion to prepare me and others for this moment," he says—a moment when his church and the surrounding community have loved and "held" one another unconditionally, while the larger structure around them "wasn't prepared for the task."

But for now, he says, they will "breathe," "sit still," and get an unobstructed look at the future. —HANNAH JONES

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REVEREND LAWRENCE RICHARDSON

The Keeper of Faith

WHEN SPEAKING with Rev. Lawrence Richardson, you sense warmth, compassion, humor, and love. You don't detect even a hint of bitterness, despite the fact that his journey to become the leader of Linden Hills United Church of Christ included enough tragic hurdles to fill a Hollywood script. As Minnesota's first transgender black pastor, he exudes a hard-won sense of accomplishment.

Born to teen parents in St. Paul, Richardson saw his alcoholic father abuse his mother, resulting in homelessness once his mom fled with the kids. Things got worse when Richardson's mother moved in with his eventual stepdad, whom Richardson describes as "the epitome of evil." Everyone in the house endured his physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Eventually, Richardson's mom snapped. "She started to see me as a demonic representation of my father," he says.

The terrified third-grader was shipped off to live with his paternal grandmother, a deeply pious Southern Baptist. The following years provided rarified tranquility for Richardson, who absorbed the comfort and teachings of church with gusto.

It wouldn't last.

At Highland Park High School, Richardson learned about sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time. His previous lessons on those subjects were less nuanced. "There was no conversation about sex and sexuality at home or at church except: Don't do it, and don't be gay," he says.

When Richardson's grandma saw him holding hands with another gender-nonconforming teen, she was certain the "demon of homosexuality" had gripped her grandson.

Literally—Richardson would be subjected to an exorcism.

Outed and booted by his grandmother, he found himself homeless yet again, this time for nine months. But miraculously, the experience brought Richardson closer to God.

"I knew God didn't dislike me," he says. "I knew the same God I prayed to as a little kid when I got nightmares was the same God that was walking with me when I was a homeless teen."

Richardson moved back in with his grandma, though strict and repressive rules were to be obeyed. Depressed and friendless as a sophomore at St. Catherine University, Richardson—the first member of his family to attend college—tried to overdose on pills. That event transformed his grandmother: She immediately apologized and accepted him, only to die one year later of lupus. Four days after that, Richardson's lupus-stricken father killed himself, leaving him responsible for his two teen sisters.

COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

After earning a master's degree at Jerry Falwell's notoriously conservative Liberty University, Richardson finally started catching some breaks. He discovered the LGBTQ-friendly United Church of Christ in 2007, and launched an online offshoot, Shift, the next year. Around the same time, Richardson first heard the word "transgender." Everything finally made sense; hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery came in the following years. "My spirit just exhaled," he says. And then, in 2014, Richardson was hired at Linden Hills United Church of Christ.

"They were working on sentencing reform, climate change, white privilege," he says. "I was in love."

Last fall, at 38, Richardson became the church's lead minister. He hopes to remain there for at least 15 years, preaching a simple but profound message.

"My religious philosophy is that God is love," he says. "We are commanded to embody and express that love with everyone we encounter, including ourselves."

—JAY BOLLER

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Marijuana SEO is a firm for cannabis advertising, but the importance of industry acknowledgements for valuable brands like Siskiyou Sungrown can hardly be overstated.

In an often wild and newfangled market for CBD and hemp products, people don't always know where to turn to get their products.

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Luckily, all Siskiyou Sungrown CBD products are lab-tested, organic and offer full-spectrum CBD relief. People use the CBD oils and tinctures for a litany of uses, and its proven quality and industry recognition make it a great addition to the Nothing But Hemp roster.

"I'm proud to see Siskiyou Sungrown on this list of the top 16 cannabis brands for 2020," Nothing But Hemp CEO Steven Brown said. "Organic from start to finish, from soil to oil, Siskiyou Sungrown continues to set the bar for health and wellness cannabinoid products."

Nothing But Hemp prides itself on connecting customers with products they can trust and providing CBD science education and guidance for newcomers and veterans of the market alike.

As Nothing But Hemp's signature house brand, Siskiyou Sungrown CBD has proved the company proud yet again for its quality of service and offerings. No matter your CBD and hemp needs, Nothing But Hemp can connect you with products like Siskiyou Sungrown in Nevada, Florida and Minnesota, as well as online.

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MAIA MAIDEN

The Choreographer

IN 2009, MAIA Maiden organized and curated Rooted, a hip-hop choreographers' evening at Patrick's Cabaret that was the first event of its kind in town. Tickets quickly sold out, and audiences clamored for it to become a regular thing.

"Again?" she remembers thinking. "I barely made it through the first time."

The bi-annual celebration has become a major touchstone in the hip-hop community, fostering artists who might have otherwise struggled to find a stage. Maiden (aka Rah Fyah) carefully curates each installment, choosing performers based on growth, career timing, and, often, raw talent.

> "I noticed that there was no place for women of color to have solo moments."

"I'm interested in the people who are getting overlooked. I'm interested in the people who have never been onstage, but have this talent," she says. "The majority of my focus is on the people on the block. People who need that hand up; nobody is looking for them. I'm looking for the 'diamond in the rough' people."

Five years after Rooted debuted, Maiden saw the chance to remedy something else the Twin Cities scene was missing. "I noticed that there was no place for women of color to have solo moments. Women of color—and men of color—are usually in groups. You rarely see solo work from people of color when it comes to what's in theaters in Minnesota."

So she began Sistah Solo, a choreographers' evening featuring not just hip-hop, but dance across all disciplines. Like Rooted, it became a bi-annual happening. And it was such a hit that, at the request of male choreographers, Being Brothas was added to the growing roster of Maia Maiden Productions shortly after.

Eleven years later, Rooted continues to thrive. But it's still the only hip-hop show of its kind. "People know about the show, but there's all these other things that we've lacked," she says. "Grants, awards, and things of that nature." Maiden hopes that by working behind the scenes, joining panels and artists' boards, her influence will increase accessibility and open doors for future choreographers.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

"That's the other part of the work I've been called to do," she says. "It's not just producing a show—that's the least of it. It's all this other hard work that has to be put in for the community so we can get what's rightfully ours."

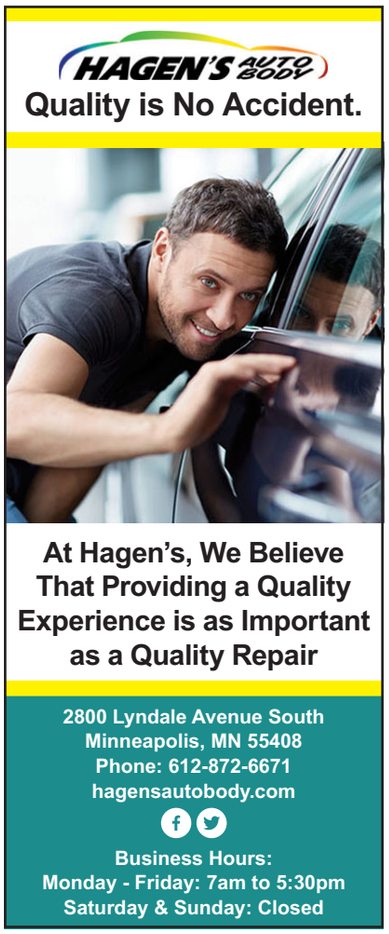
Maiden has been a dancer and a choreographer since she was 15. Incredibly, though, this isn't her day job: She's an assistant professor at Rasmussen College. But having a medical laboratory science degree and an MBA is part of her overall mission, too.

Ultimately, what she wants is to support artists of color, and to show the Twin Cities why hip-hop is what's next.

"It's about showing young ladies out there—and really, grown women, too—hey, you can do this," she says. "Sometimes all you need is that example. I didn't have that example."

This year, Maia Maiden Productions plans to level up once again with a three-day festival that will feature a choreographers' set, a krump battle, and a free day of classes for all ages. Maiden is also planning for an international artists' exchange.

—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER



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TOASTING THE YEAR OF THE RAT

Now is the best time to try baijiu, the world's most consumed spirit

BY SARAH BRUMBLE

Most of America hasn't heard of baijiu. We don't really drink the deeply traditional, super popular Chinese liquor here—and certainly not with the same gusto.

In 2017, 10.8 billion (with a B) liters of baijiu were sold globally, nearly all of which were consumed in China. Still, America abstains only partly due to the beverage's relative scarcity.

Prior to speaking with Alec Fotsch of Ganbei Baijiu—a Minneapolis-based, China-produced liquor start-up—a friend and I stumbled upon a small, surprise menu of traditional baijiu at a restaurant near the University of Minnesota campus.

When staff informed us that only the cheapest option was available, your author thought, "What could possibly go wrong?"

We were presented with uncouth pours of Er Guo Tuo, aka the Budweiser of baijiu. While I'd describe it as having notes of "hot fire" and "we've made a terrible mistake," natethegreat of baijiureview.com proves more eloquent in recounting his experience with the spirit. He writes, "Finishes like clearing out a 747 tank."

A quick Google revealed that particular baijiu hovers somewhere between 50 and 60 percent alcohol.

"Traditional baijiu can almost be offensive to a palate that's grown up in America," says Fotsch. Despite its international popularity, baijiu has a special way of generating good-natured chuckles, stories, and the occasional warning. "It's really funky for a spirit."

Unlike Er Guo Tuo, this new baijiu by Ganbei—co-founded by Andrew Hoogerwerf, Kockyo Xiong, and Fotsch—aims to maximize enjoyment and minimize suffering, while remaining faithful to traditional production methods, which predate the Ming Dynasty.

At its most basic, all baijiu is clear grain alcohol made from sorghum—plus a little rice, corn, and wheat—created through solid-state fermentation (usually in an earthen pit), then aged in clay and stainless steel casks for a period of time comparable to American whiskeys.

Ganbei works with mega-distiller Hetao to craft theirs using this same ancient method in Inner Mongolia. It ages for three years before a master blender (kind of like a baijiu sommelier) tailors Ganbei's baijiu for the American palate.

Fotsch says they didn't task their blender with pushing the boundaries of baijiu; rather, she "tamed it out" so new palates can appreciate the spirit.

LUCY HAWTHORNE

"It's actually traditionally, normal Chinese baijiu that are blended, and then brought down to 42 percent [ABV]—whereas most Chinese baijiu, the average is 55 percent," he says. "It's just not something that's approachable in any way, especially to someone who didn't grow up in China."

When sipped neat as intended, Ganbei is enjoyable, even as its flavors are wild and hard to place. Sorting out what Ganbei tastes like is akin to staring at a color you've never seen before. It's a mesmerising task, but not easy.

Imagine if a bag of Tropical Starburst were to over-ripen, then mix in a little wet hay, plus a pinch of mild flowers—except the delivery vehicle for these aromas is a high-proof spirit like aguardiente with a splash of arak. Fotsch says they "worked to bring forward some of the sort of floral, stone fruit notes" in the blending process.

Potato, *pot-ah-to*.

Similarly challenging are international laws for importing alcohol from Inner Mongolia to Minnesota. The teensy start-up manages to navigate these waters by working with the Seward neighborhood's most laid-back cocktailers.

"Technically, as the U.S. government is concerned, [Ganbei] is produced by Lawless Distilling Company, and because of that, it's available at their bar; but it is made at Hetao, imported to Lawless, and sold from there," explains Fotsch, with a dry laugh.

"It's got some proof so it works really well as an ingredient," says Louie LaFleur, manager of Bittercube's cocktail consulting (the folks behind Lawless's bar program). Though bonding Ganbei over was purely a revenue thing (not about changing American palates), having a baijiu permanently on their back bar allows the team to flex, challenging themselves to push the envelope while constantly upping their cocktail game thanks to Ganbei's incredibly complex flavor profile. Their menu regularly features a drink with the spirit.

"We have cocktails with a full two ounces and some with a quarter-ounce, but no matter what—it's always there," says Lafleur, with warmth in his voice. "It's just so tropical!"

Beyond the newness factor, what makes bringing this currently niche-market beverage to Minnesota a worthy endeavor for Ganbei—especially at the low price point of $40 per bottle?

"We wanted to build some bridges between two countries who've been straying apart. We had a bunch of big heady ideas that were, like, geopolitical," says Fotsch. "We really want to just foster some understanding and appreciation [that] what the Chinese government does is not what the people in China do, largely. And the same is true with places like Iran."

To bring this mission to life, Ganbei is partnering with six local bars (Hai Hai, JUN Szechuan, Lat14 Asian Eatery, Nightingale, the Chatterbox Pub, and Rainbow Chinese) to create cocktails incorporating their baijiu now through the Lantern Festival (February 4). Each location's drink is unique, and acts as an invitation to appreciate the spirit's flavor without diving in full-on. The metro-wide cocktail series aims to celebrate a huge, worldwide holiday season while uniting disparate cultural elements beneath an approachably human (cocktail) umbrella. Sealing the deal are red envelopes accompanying each baijiu cocktail, provided by Ganbei—stuffed with the potential to win a baijiu service set for four in place of the traditional money, and information about Lunar New Year.

Rainbow's "Rat King" gimlet—named for the year that's just begun according to Chinese zodiac—is a wonder. Made with Ganbei's baijiu, gin, ginger lime syrup, orange bitters, kaffir lime, and kumquat, the cocktail is bright and refreshing, served up in a hue of green we often forget exists during these mid-winter blahs. It's also puzzlingly round in the mouth and feels like it shouldn't fit in a single martini glass.

If every American began their baijiu journey with a Rat King instead instead of Er Guo Tuo, the domestic liquor industry might not know what hit it. And if we're being darkly realistic, the forecast for world peace is looking pretty bleak—but the chances of getting the world tipsy together? Now there's a thought.

If we came together for a stiff drink—messy though that may get—it would behoove us to understand how to approach baijiu. Should that happen, prepare to raise a glass and say... *ganbei*.

Yes, our local baijiu company has, all this time, just been waiting to "cheers" everyone, everywhere. CP

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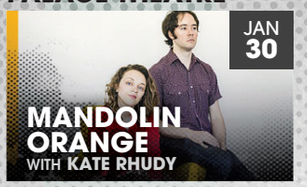

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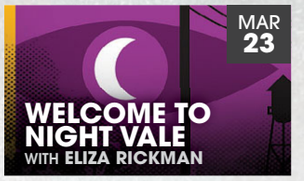

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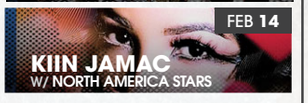

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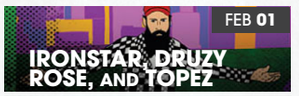

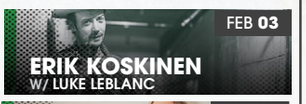

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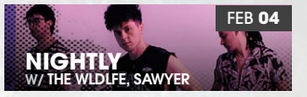
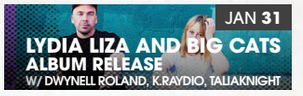
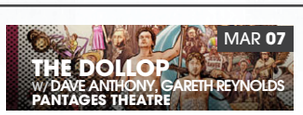
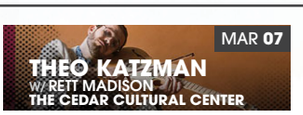




AROUND TOWN





A LIST

SATURDAY Dogs compete in the Pupper Bowl at Bauhaus Brew Labs **p. 45**

SUNDAY Lush hosts a big gay Super Bowl watch party with drag queens **p. 49**

WEDNESDAY 1.29

THEATER

JOGGING

GUTHRIE THEATER

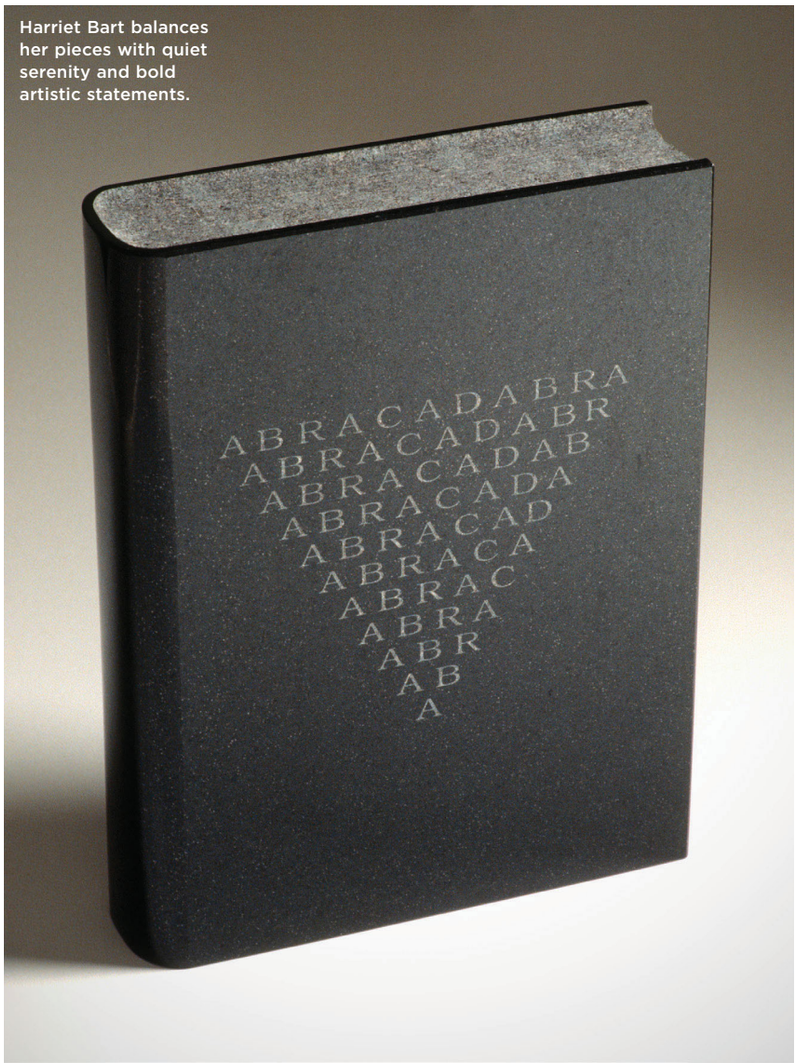
Lebanese conceptual artist Hanane Hajj Ali's one-woman show, *Jogging*, is a contemplative tour of a Beirut neighborhood and the diverse inner lives of those who make up the community. As the primary narrator, Ali invites the audience into her head as she runs along her route, reflecting on the tragedies and triumphs that have shaped her conflicted and scarred city. Along the way, the narrative broadens, transforming Ali into a series of Arab women contemplating their roles as students, activists, wives, and mothers. This composite of myriad female figures honors the complexity of a culture that is often viewed by Western audiences through a limited lens. Ali counters such reductive impressions with her energetic portrayals, authenticity, and audience interactions. Rising to the forefront of Ali's musings is Medea, an ancient figure whose heartrending sacrifices are drawn to parallel those of contemporary Middle Eastern women. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 1 p.m. Sunday. $9-$32. 818 S. Second St., Minneapolis; 612-377-2224. **Through Sunday —BRAD RICHASON**

COMEDY

MICHAEL PALASCAK

ACME COMEDY CO.

City Pages caught up with comedian Michael Palascak via phone from his home in Los Angeles, where he was busy taking care of his son. "I talk about being a dad some," he says of his set. "It's more about making fun of myself. My mom told me, 'You better not talk about him onstage. He's not something you use for material.'" Palascak also discusses being a comedian who travels the country. Growing up, he wanted to be an athlete, even going as far as trying out for his college baseball team at Xavier University in Cincinnati. "I didn't make it. That's when I started doing acting and improv." Comedy followed when he moved to Chicago. It was something that was in him for a long time. "I just had an insane level of confidence from an early age that I could make people laugh—even though I didn't," he explains. "I thought, 'I can make people laugh, they just don't know it yet.'" Palascak has performed on nearly all of the late-night talk shows, and will be recording his shows at Acme for a new album. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. $15-$20. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**



Harriet Bart balances her pieces with quiet serenity and bold artistic statements.

HARRIET BART, *ABRACADABRA BOOK*

THURSDAY 1.30

ART/GALLERY

JAMIE ROBERTSON: MAKING REFERENCE

JUXTAPOSITION ARTS

The portrait photography of Houston-based artist Jamie Robertson is somehow deeply personal, historical, and detached—all at once. "This series allows me to explore the history of black women in the Americas and how they were seen," she says, "while simultaneously allowing me the agency of self-representation to confront perceptions of my own identity." Her work is highly evocative of the past, referencing colonial-era images of black women from the Caribbean and South America, but is also critical of who originally did the framing: white people of wealth. There are typical signifiers of past eras here—think flowers in the hair and large gold hoop earrings—but also moments of vulnerability and modernity as she contemplates how subverting and recreating such histories can lead to self-reflection. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, January 30, from 6 to 8 p.m. Free. 2007 Emerson Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-588-1148. **Through March 7 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

ART/GALLERY

WHEN THE MISTS LIFT

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Cree artist Chholing Taha breathes fresh sensibility into traditional idioms. As vivid as waking dreams, her paintings and textiles feature bright colors and detailed imagery, often in bold relief against backgrounds of elusive figures or symbols. In this solo show, curated by John Schuerman, the Anoka-based artist creates work that comes to her mind fully formed. The harmony and balance conveyed may seem more decorative at times, while telling a long-forgotten story at others. Uplifting and restorative, Taha's pieces are a visual palate-cleanser in today's world, offering a reprieve that enlightens the spirit. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, January 30, from 5 to 7 p.m. 700 Seventh St. E., Gordon Parks Gallery, St. Paul; 651-793-1300. **Through February 27 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

FRIDAY 1.31

FESTIVAL/SPORTS

CITY OF LAKES LOPPET WINTER FESTIVAL

THEODORE WIRTH PARK

Winter weather rarely stops Minnesotans from having outdoor fun. In fact, there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45 ▶

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Attention Neck and Back Pain Sufferers!

Back By Request…

Saturday, February 8th, 2020

Neck and Back Pain/Sciatica Workshop

"The Best Kept Secrets of Easing Neck and Lower Back Pain - and Staying Pain Free"

Do you suffer with back pain or leg pain when you stand or walk?
Do you have pain when you sit or drive for long periods?
Does your neck or back cause you to lose sleep at night?
Does your neck or back bother you at work and impact your performance?
Do you have tightness and a "pinching" feeling in your shoulder blades?
Are you afraid your pain will get worse if you don't do anything about it?

If you have answered YES to any of the above questions (or have a stubborn spouse or friend who is in denial) then this Workshop may be a life changing event for you...

"My back pain used to to prevent from sitting long periods at work, sleeping through the night, and performing home repairs that I could not before. Best of all, I no longer have to depend on pain medications or injections that did not work for me!"
- Kevin P. Andover, MN

- **It can give you headaches, cause dizziness and make you feel nauseous ruining your day..**
- **It can take your focus away on enjoying your life... like spending time with your children or grandchildren**
- **It can mess up your work and force you to do a job you might not like or want to do.**
- **It can ruin your travel plans.. It can impact the quality of your life!**

And less movement and enjoying of life can lead to depression, increased stress and a sedentary life-style (mostly sitting and not moving much) which leads to bigger health problems and life problems!!!

Because we have helped so many people in our community who have suffered needlessly with their neck or lower back we have been asked to host this workshop.

So by request...I will be hosting this workshop at on the following date:

Saturday February 8th, 2020 from 10-11 AM at our clinic:

Midwest Physical Therapy
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If you are confused and about what to do and looking for answers here is what you will learn:

- **The single biggest #1 mistake that neck and back pain sufferers do that keep them from healing**
- **The 3 most common causes of shoulder/shoulder blade pain and tightness - and sciatica pain..**
- **A sure-fire way to pick the right treatment for you without spending a lot of time and money**
- **How a problem coming from your neck or back can cause pain, numbness, tingling in your shoulder, arms or legs**
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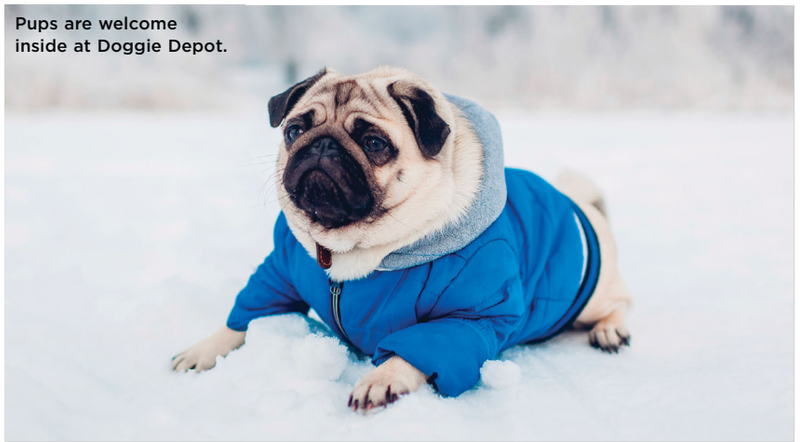
How do you sign up? How much is it to attend? Nothing!
This workshop is FREE... call 612-707-0169 ... only taking 10 attendees

Caleb Anderson, DPT, CSCS
Midwest Physical Therapy

PS: Neck and Back Pain Workshop on Saturday February 8th, 2020 10-11 AM . Learn how to naturally heal your neck and back pain for good!!
PSS: This event seating is limited to the first 10 people who register so call 612-707-0169 to reserve your spot!!



Pups are welcome inside at Doggie Depot.

GETTY

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ▶

are plenty of sports that can only be enjoyed in the dead of winter. See a sampling of these things at the City of Lakes Loppet Winter Festival, a three-day celebration of cold-weather athleticism. Most events can be found at Theodore Wirth Park, where folks can watch or compete in a variety of tournaments and races. Those include broomball, fat tire biking, cross country ski sprints, and skijoring, an adorable race wherein humans on skis are pulled by dogs. Other fun to discover includes a snow sculpting contest, a beer garden, a family-friendly festival, and the Luminary Loppet, a nighttime candlelit stroll around Lake of the Isles. For the complete schedule, visit loppet.org. 5 to 9 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday. Prices vary, but most events are free to watch. 1339 Theodore Wirth Pkwy., Minneapolis; 612-230-6400.
Through Sunday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

ART/MUSEUM

HARRIET BART: ABRACADABRA AND OTHER FORMS OF PROTECTION

FREDERICK R. WEISMAN ART MUSEUM

Harriet Bart creates acts of artistic alchemy. Since her first solo exhibition at the WARM Gallery in downtown Minneapolis in 1978 (Bart was a cofounder), she's been generating profoundly mesmerizing and evocative work (including artist books, mixed-media installations, and object-based totems) using metals, stone, wood, paper, words, and fabric. Her purpose is to commemorate, draw attention to, or signify. At times she is examining aspects of her own life, at others remembering victims of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City or American troops killed in Iraq. In this retrospective, which Bart organized in collaboration with Laura Wertheim Joseph, curator of exhibitions at the Minnesota Museum of American Art, her decades of heart-stopping brilliance and innovative rigor are on full display. Her work is nothing short of awe-inspiring. There will be an opening reception and preview party Friday, January 31, from 7 to 10 p.m. Free. 333 E. River Rd., Minneapolis; 612-625-9494.
Through May 24 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

THEATER

CAVE

BRYANT-LAKE BOWL

The Cinematic & Audio Visual Experimentation (CAVE) Festival is back and ready to blow your mind with works that push outside the traditional mold. In addition to film screenings by local and national artists, the multi-day event includes panel discussions and a cyanotype workshop. This year's featured filmmakers are Nazli Dinçel, a Turkish-born artist who makes her work by hand in a film lab in Milwaukee, and Margaret Rorison, a filmmaker/curator based in Baltimore, who will lead the workshop. There will be an evening of pieces by University of Iowa MFA artists, plus a showcase of Minnesota artists. The festival culminates with a reception at the Walker Art Center. 7 and 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday. A panel talk (11 a.m.) and a reception (1 p.m.) will be held Sunday at the Walker Art Center. $5-$15 sliding scale. 810 W. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-825-3737.
Through Sunday —SHEILA REGAN

SATURDAY 2.1

DOGS

DOGGIE DEPOT

UNION DEPOT

Once again, the Union Depot is hosting a dog party as part of the Saint Paul

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47 ▶

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See works from woodblock print master Yoshitoshi at Mia.

YOSHITOSHI, *MOON: ACTOR ICHIKAWA SANSHŌ AS KEZORI KUEMON*

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ▶

Winter Carnival. The morning starts off with a dog and human yoga session (sign up online to reserve a spot), followed by things to see and do, regardless of your species. Dog-friendly breweries, restaurants, and peddlers of pup-themed paraphernalia will be in attendance with samples, coupons, and items for sale, and a brewery passport featuring these businesses will also be available for purchase at the event. The happening will culminate with the crowning of the canine king and queen of the carnival. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free. 214 Fourth St. E., St. Paul; 651-202-2700. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

ART/MUSEUM

YOSHITOSHI: MASTER DRAFTSMAN TRANSFORMED

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

In 2017, Mia acquired close to 300 works by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) from the Edmond Freis collection. Considered by art experts as the last major artist of the traditional Japanese woodblock print, Yoshitoshi's technical ability to transform changing cultural tastes into exquisitely detailed work is captured in this exhibition of more than 40 works. Sketches, drawings, paintings, and printed works are on display in an exhibition that follows the artist's career as Japan transitioned from a feudal to modern society. Free. 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-870-3131. **Through April 8 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

DOGS

PUPPER BOWL

BAUHAUS BREW LABS

January was a rough month for Vikings and Packers fans, but the Pupper Bowl has something that will bring people together—even people who don't know (or care!) what the first part of this sentence means. Pupper Bowl very is loosely inspired by the Super Bowl, but with dogs. The day begins with an adoption event at 11 a.m., sponsored by Ruff Start Rescue, followed by dog... football. There are three weight classes that attendees can buy into for $20 (advance registration recommended). That scores you a beer and a bandana, and you get to watch your confused pet try to score for your team. The competition should be fierce, but adorable. Other canine fun his weekend includes live TV viewings of Animal Planet's Puppy Bowl on Sunday at Stanley's (there will be mutt loaf on the menu) and at the Block in St. Louis Park. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free to watch; $20 to compete. 1315 Tyler St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-276-6911. **—LOREN GREEN**

THEATER

THE UGLY ONE

OPEN EYE FIGURE THEATRE

Theater doesn't always need to play coy. "In *The Ugly One*, we've dropped all subtlety," says director Amy Rummenie. "It tears along at farce-like speed, and the wit is razor-sharp. It's a nearly dizzying script, using sharp character turns to veer from scene to scene without pause." German playwright Marius von Mayenburg has been compared to his unsparing American contemporary Neil LaBute, so get ready to wince with recognition of the hard truths in this satire about a man who seeks to improve his underwhelming appearance with plastic surgery that works all too well. Walking Shadow Theatre Company is presenting this short and punchy play at Open Eye Figure Theatre, a cocoon-like space that is always somehow redolent of its namesake company's macabre,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49 ▶

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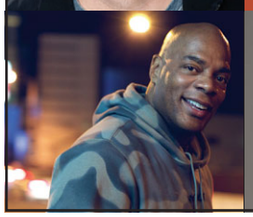
Feb 7, 8
NICK HOFF
with Nathan Hults & Matt Dooyema



Coming in March
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Coming in April
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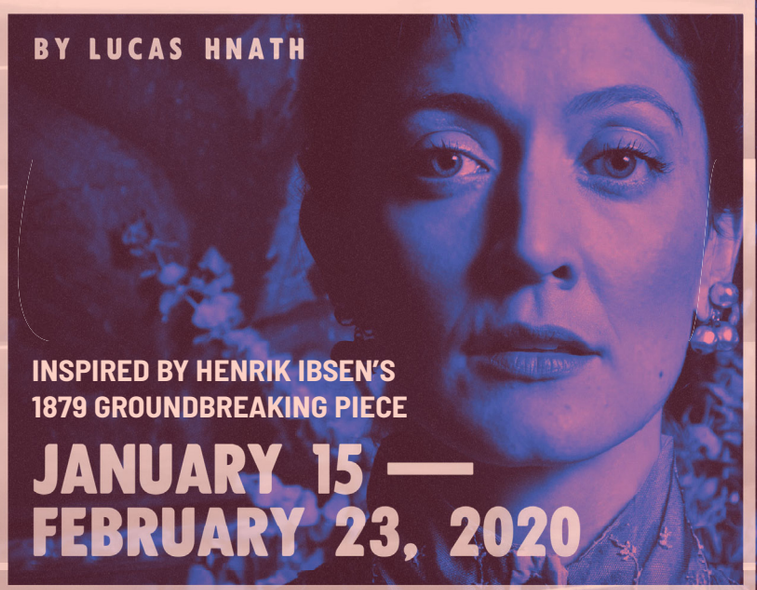
A DOLL'S HOUSE
PART 2
BY LUCAS HNATH



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The Ugly One: Fixing your face only goes so far.

CUBSTOCK

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ▶

darkly comedic aura. That should prove a perfect fit for *The Ugly One*, says Rummenie. "I love how that demure proscenium arch frames the stage, focusing us in on the action." With scene changes "in the blink of an eye," she adds, "this will have to be all about the action." Find tickets at brownpapertickets.com. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, plus Tuesday, February 4, and Wednesday, February 12; 2 p.m. Sundays. $15-$38. 506 E. 24th St., Minneapolis.

Through February 16 —JAY GABLER

SUNDAY 2.2

LGBTQ/SPORTS

THE BIG GAY SUPERBOWL PARTY

LUSH

The Super Bowl is all about spectacle, binge drinking, eating trashy food, and laughing at the halftime show. Level up your celebration by adding drag to festivities. While the big sporty soap opera plays live on 11 giant screens, you'll be able to gorge on a buffet of traditional eats (think wings, nachos, popcorn, and even vegan and vegetarian options). Every touchdown scores you a round of Jell-O shots in the team's color/flavor. Adding a little glitz to the organized chaos will be sets from queens, including host Victoria DeVille, and a cash bar should ensure that you'll roll into work on Monday with at least a little bit of a salt or booze hangover. RSVPs are recommended, so call to reserve a spot. 5 to 10 p.m. Free; $10 for buffet eats. 990 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-208-0358. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

FILM

DOVES AND GUNS: THE FILMS OF JOHN WOO

TRYLON CINEMA

John Woo's enormously influential action films are revered for an escalating intensity and gunfights that play out with balletic grace. Demonstrating the filmmaker's signature style with five of his most memorable works, the Trylon Cinema is presenting Doves and Guns: The Films of John Woo. The series begins with *The Killer* (1989), the Hong Kong thriller that brought Woo international acclaim via the story of a principled assassin (played by Woo's frequent star, Chow Yun-Fat) seeking redemption while being pursued by gangsters and one particularly obsessive police detective. Woo's U.S. debut, *Hard Target* (1993), presents Jean-Claude Van Damme as a Cajun seaman who runs afoul of a demented organization that makes sport out of hunting the homeless. Even more brazenly outlandish is *Face/Off* (1997), wherein Nicholas Cage's cop and John Travolta's criminal swap identities in an effort to lethally thwart the other. The series concludes back in Hong Kong, with two movies that straddle both sides of the law, *Hard Boiled* (1992) and *A Better Tomorrow* (1986), both featuring iconic Chow Yun-Fat performances, as a ruthless police officer in the former and as a tormented Triad mobster in the latter. Showtimes vary slightly each week; visit trylon.org for the complete schedule. Sundays through Tuesdays. $8. 2820 E. 33rd St., Minneapolis; 612-424-5468.

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FILM

"DAD'S ACTING WEIRD, RIGHT?"

H.P. Lovecraft and Nic Cage meet at last in *Color Out of Space*

RLJE FILMS

BY KEITH HARRIS

If movies have taught us anything, it's that a meteor crashing to Earth is not a good thing. In director Richard Stanley's new adaptation of the H.P. Lovecraft story "The Color Out of Space"—renamed *Color Out of Space* just to be difficult—the reality-splintering effects of a plummeted space rock, which disseminates an otherworldly hue never before seen on our planet, drive a mild-mannered family man played by Nicolas Cage so far over the brink he begins acting... well, like Nicolas Cage.

Cage is Nathan Gardner, a be-cardiganed gent who raises alpacas in his late father's country home while his wife, Theresa (Joely Richardson), rakes in the cybercash brokering deals with clients in their attic. Their eldest son's an aspiring stoner, their daughter's an aspiring Wiccan, and their youngest son is an aspiring creepy-kid-with-glasses-in-a-horror-movie-who-stares-catatonically-and-talks-to-monsters-only-he-can-see. Tommy Chong squats on their land with hippie aplomb because why not. And into this idiosyncratic idyll strolls a dishy young hydrologist (Elliot Knight), who's conveniently visiting town to survey the water table when the meteor hits. He soon discovers that Something Is Not Right.

And something sure as hell isn't. The sickly, otherworldly color inexorably creeps into the film from the edges of the frame, futzing with flora and fauna alike at a cellular level if not deeper. Lightning storms, open wells, knives (kitchen and utility), animals of the domestic and farm variety, and staticky electronic devices all prove just as dangerous as you'd expect under the spooky circumstances. But there's no greater threat to the Gardners than each other.

Capturing Lovecraft accurately onscreen is a perilous task—poor Guillermo del Toro struggled to adapt *At the Mountains of Madness* for years. Stanley is no stranger to doomed cinematic exploits, either: After making a name for himself in the early '90s with a distinctive horror/sci-fi vision, he got canned from the Brando version of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* in 1996 for blowing his budget and hasn't directed a non-documentary feature again till now. Lovecraft's descriptions are literally unrepresentable—obviously you can't film a color that doesn't exist—but the lurid prismatic violetish Stanley hits on is more than sufficient to suspend disbelief, and when the extraterrestrial horror ultimately cracks reality wide open, the visuals deliver.

Well-crafted but without an A24 flick's sense of fussy import, *Color Out of Space* plunges happily into the nonsensical when the time comes. The script suggests sublimated fears slowly being unleashed—Theresa's lingering insecurity over her mastectomy, Nathan's strained relationship with his father—but Stanley thankfully doesn't push it too hard. For a film that begins rooted in familiar domesticity, the human stakes have all but vanished by the end—you don't stay tuned in to see who survives, but for the jump scares and gross-outs, to see what grotesquerie is in store, and to watch a certain actor go off the rails. No one seeks out Nicolas Cage for character development, after all—you want pure Nic schtick.

And schtick you shall receive. Nic Cage lashing out at foul-tasting fruits and vegetables. Nic Cage affecting an accent that suggests the villain in a direct-to-Hulu *Die Hard* sequel. Nic Cage declaring "The car. Is not. Happening." If you're onboard with Cage's lifelong mission to defy naturalist acting and portray human behavior in as many inaccurate ways as possible, this is a treat. At one point, one of Nathan's kids asks the other, "Dad's acting weird, right?," and all you can do is shake your head and say, "Oh kid, you have no idea what you're in for."

COLOR OUT OF SPACE
directed by Richard Stanley
area theaters, now playing

THEATER

HOUSE OF PAIN

There's no room for whimsy in *Bernarda Alba*

DAN NORMAN

BY JAY GABLER

BERNARDA ALBA
Theater Latte Da
345 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
612-339-3003; through February 16

Five sisters share a house with their single mother and a maternal maid, peeking through their windows at a charismatic dude who has passionate stirrings for one sister yet ends up engaged to another. Theater Latté Da's *Bernarda Alba* casts powerful women in powerful roles, but after 90 minutes of brutally somber songs, you might start to wonder what Greta Gerwig would do with this material.

Crystal Manich directs this new production, the regional premiere of Michael John LaChiusa's 2006 musical adaptation of Federico García Lorca's 1936 play. The *Little Women* parallels go beyond plot: Like Louisa May Alcott, the Spanish writer was caught up in a civil war, one he was tragically not to survive. Just two months after completing *Bernarda Alba*, Lorca was assassinated.

LaChiusa's adaptation accentuates the hothouse atmosphere of a story that gives these women strong voices that they often turn against each other, having lost faith that criticizing men will lead to any progress. The eponymous matriarch, played with earth-shaking gravity by a cane-wielding Regina Marie Williams, preaches a gospel of self-control: As a woman, she figures, your body is your one bargaining chip. Spend it carelessly, and you deserve whatever fate befalls you.

Twice widowed, Bernarda guards her house like a fortress, and her daughters come to fixate on an ostentatiously available bachelor as the sole outlet of their potential liberation. The unseen Pepe can only marry one of them, and eldest daughter Angustias (Kate Beahen) has the most money.

During that courtship, Bernarda's youngest daughter, Adela (Stephanie Bertumen), signals her availability for a less formal attachment—infuriating the jealous Martirio (Meghan Kreidler), whose own prospects look about as promising as those of a snowball in Seville. The slats of Kate Sutton-Johnson's set shake as horses in the family stables kick at their stalls, desperate to rut. (You probably don't need an entire musical number to catch the symbolism there, but you get one just in case.)

LaChiusa's long-limbed melodies, accompanied by Jason Hansen's hidden band and accentuated by the actors' body percussion, provide a stunning showcase for these voices. The intermission-less show is a long song of seething; Manich and her cast sustain an anguished slow burn so intense that no one even tried to clap between songs at last Friday's performance.

Kreidler and Bertumen are superb as the duo whose confrontation sparks a climax. In recent years Kreidler has been widely and rightly heralded as one of the most compelling stars in Twin Cities theater; Bertumen, also gifted, is less widely known, but that seems likely to change soon. Here, she's perfectly cast in a role that employs both sympathetic spunk and tragic depth.

Bernarda Alba is a bracing, bleak meditation on the corrosive effects of a repressive patriarchy. You'll wish these vibrant characters joy, but Bernarda's is a house of pain.

THEATER MU

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Seaberg and the Black Velvet Punks

RYAN STOPERA/FREE TRUTH MEDIA

POISED TO POP 2020

10 Twin Cities artists you'll be hearing a lot more from this year

BY JERARD FAGERBERG

We're done looking backward. It's a new decade, and the Twin Cities is ready for a new top class of musical talent.

The annual Picked to Click poll in October awards the best new artists in Minneapolis/St. Paul. But long before that popularity contest goes down, we take a moment to reward those who reached a maturation point over the past year. They sent the emails, played the gigs, put in the studio time, perfected their rise. The momentum has mounted, and now they're primed to reap the rewards.

These are the musicians poised to ring in the 2020s with a memorable year.

Why Not

For fans of: Battles, American Football

When we first wrote about Why Not back in 2017, they were high school sophomores. They were making tight, technical math rock, but they were living in the shadow of the Happy Children, drummer Joshua MacGregor's brother's band. No more. The trio of MacGregor, Isaac Drell, and Henry Breen have spent two years polishing their songwriting. Their recent single "No Suggestions Here" felt like a realization, their 18-stop North American tour like a coming-out party. Now they're back in the Twin Cities and readying to play Big Turn in Red Wing in February.

Seaberg and the BlackVelvet Punks

For fans of: Chance the Rapper, Erykah Badu

Soul-funk maestros Seaberg and the Black Velvet Punks fell just short of placing in Picked to Click 2019, and that feels like an injustice. If the trio of Taylor Seaberg, Traiveon Dunlap, and Roderick Glasper feels cool and collected on record—last year's debut, *Silhouettes*, plays with the precision of a Swiss watch—the band is masterful on stage. In front of a crowd, Seaberg comes to life in thrilling, passionate episodes. It can feel like a slam poetry reading, or like New Orleans nightclub. It depends on the night and the tune, but the unpredictability is seductive.

NATL PARK SRVC

For fans of: Parquet Courts, Protomartyr

Despite the title of their November EP *The Future Is Now*, there's nothing ultramodern about NATL PARK SRVC's sound. It's a timeless mix of jangly guitar, snotty lyrics, and gang vocals that should resonate with garage-rockers of any era. Maybe you hear Pavement in their languid melodies. Maybe it's Bouncing Souls in their fill-the-room choruses. Whatever the nostalgia this basement band drums up in your soul, you'll be helpless to resist once you hear Dylan Woytcke, Nathan Zillmer, Jared Leger, Sam Tudor, and Josue Hernandez send up "Sea of Thought," one of 2019's hidden gems.

Inhvmanity

For fans of: Bolt Thrower, your dad's old concert tees

Minnesota's teeming metal scene continues to churn out world-class acts, but like a lot of music scenes it's still very white and straight. So Inhvmanity stand out with their relentless queer thrash metal. Helmed by Xochi de la Luna, the artist/activist behind the intersectional cabaret Mother Goose's Bedtime Stories, Inhvmanity bring a new level of visibility to the anger and discord of growing up as an agender first-generation Latinx in the Great White North. The noise is easy for anyone to connect to, and once this howling quartet lay their setlist to wax, they'll be a favorite for any local metalhead.

Wax Lead

For fans of: Nick Cave, Depeche Mode

Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen, Ian Curtis—meet Holly Axelrod, your Minneapolis successor. The Wax Lead frontwoman gives the brash and brooding rock-poet archetype a much-needed feminist reckoning, and the 2018 EP *Husband, Lord, & Master* was an exquisite "fuck you" to the rock 'n' roll establishment. But Wax Lead's rebellion is less of a manifesto and more of an attitude. The riffs echo like a brick chucked through a stained-glass window. The bass licks can only be played while snarling. Everything about this band wakes up the pissed-off teenager in your skin and makes her want to climb into the front row.

Kamilla Love

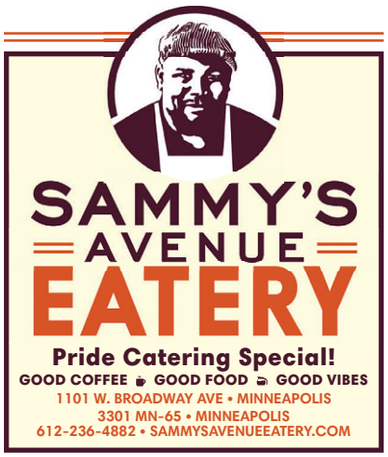
For fans of: Tinashe, 21 Savage

Listen to "Fucking Barbie Girl" and you'll immediately understand how far Kamilla Love stands out from her peers in the Minneapolis/St. Paul music scene. The song is a mission statement, defining Love against all the industrialized bullshit she opposes. She's hard-edged and venomous, and she raps like she's striking matches off her teeth. So far, Love's been operating in the shadows (she barely has any web presence), but her frequent collaborations with booboo and Izell Pyramid should ensure her ascendance in 2020.

Harper's Jar

For fans of: The Libertines, PBR tallboys

Harper's Jar is one of those names that you see on every show flyer in the Twin Cities. Whether it's a Saturday at the Entry or a Wednesday DIY show in a basement, the snot-rock trio of Devin Ware, Ian Robert, and Kyle Kennedy might not make the top of the bill, but they'll whip up the crowd



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before your band even gets to plug in. With Ware's taut Brit-punk vocals and Robert's fanatical, riff-driven breakdowns, Harper's Jar take you from hands-in-your-pockets side swaying to involuntary pogo dancing in the course of one short set. November single "Dandy Golden Blue" was a tantalizing hint at what their debut full-length, *Thank You Ancestor Finger*, might sound like when it's released in April, and this month's "Home Is a Roach Motel" just upped the anticipation.

YYY

For fans of: The Weeknd, Jeremih

Electronic producer Adam Carson wrote a love letter to the Beach Boys in 2017, marking the name YYY in the Twin Cities for the first time. Carson had previously played with False Teeth, but *A Tribute to the Beach Boys' Pet Sounds* was a bizarre project that brought together people from all over the scene. P.O.S, Dem Atlas, Elle PF, and Fort Wilson Riot all pitched in for YYY's fevered re-imagining, a harbinger of great things for the true YYY debut that's scheduled for this spring. Who will spring up to join Carson in his first self-directed vision—and more importantly, what sensual worlds will he usher them into?

Vial

For fans of: Soccer Mommy, Julien Baker

Adulthood is a curse, and doesn't KT Branscom fucking know it. The Vial singer is an unlocked diary waiting to be opened and pored over. If you're the kind of person who likes hurting their own feelings from time to time, Vial's November debut, *Grow Up*, will feel like a tearstained letter from your past self. But don't worry, Branscom and their bandmates Taylor Kraemer, Katie Fischer, and Kate Kanfield are progressing, and Vial are quickly gaining a following for their banshee tendencies as well as their outspoken commitment to inclusivity and gender consciousness.

The Shackeltons

For fans of: The Hold Steady, Uptown after midnight

Sibling bands have a certain chemistry that only wrestling on the living-room carpet can foster. Brothers Cameron, Colin, and Evan Campbell formed the Shackletons in 2014 as a vehicle for their nose-thumbing family humor and mutual affinity for lighthearted punk. They hit a point of resonance with single "Minnesota Girls" in 2017, but that dalliance feels far from the Shackletons' ceiling. The band's staggering, nothing-sacred storytelling and straight-up sing-alongs can turn idle barflies into mosh pit maniacs. After a pair of successful EPs, the Shackletons took 2019 off from recording to prepare for an LP release in 2020, and this could be the record that finally steadies them in the spotlight.

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

♈ **ARIES** (March 21–April 19): My favorite ancient Greek philosopher was the rascal Diogenes. As a joke, he carried around a lantern during the daytime, proclaiming, "I am just looking for an honest man." When Alexander the Great, the most powerful man in the world, came to meet Diogenes while he was relaxing outside and asked him if he needed any favors done, he replied, "Yeah, stop blocking my sunlight." As for Plato, Diogenes complained that the famous philosopher talked too damn much and misinterpreted the teachings of Socrates. I encourage you to borrow some of Diogenes' attitude in the coming weeks. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, it'll be healing for you to experiment with being brassy, saucy, and sassy. Emphasize what makes you most unique, independent, and self-expressive.

♉ **TAURUS** (April 20–May 20): Taurus author Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) published his first novel at age 30. During the next 37 years, he completed 48 additional novels and 18 works of nonfiction. Critics liked his work well enough, but were suspicious of his prodigious productivity. When they discovered that one of Trollope's motivations for writing was to make money, they disapproved. Then they found out that Trollope kept a watch nearby as he worked, determined to generate 250 words every 15 minutes. The critics hated that even worse. Creative artists are supposed to court inspiration, not adhere to a schedule—at least according to the critics. But I approve of and recommend Trollope-like behavior for you in the coming weeks, Taurus. Cosmic forces will be on your side if you do.

♊ **GEMINI** (May 21–June 20): In accordance with the astrological indicators, I invite you to rise and soar and glide during the coming weeks. I encourage you to expand and enlarge and amplify. Don't wait around hoping to be asked to explore and experiment and improvise—just do those things. It's high time for you to enjoy stirring quests and research projects and missions dedicated to discovery. Be a fun-loving pioneer. Sample the joys of being a maverick and outlier.

♋ **CANCER** (June 21–July 22): I love living in the material world. Its crazy-making demands and exhilarating rewards are endlessly entertaining. Despite having been born as a fantasy-prone, overly sensitive Cancerian, I've become fairly earthy and well-grounded. I have a good job, a nice house, a smart wife, and an interesting daughter. On the other hand, I also love living in the soul's realm. I have remembered and recorded an average of three dreams per night for many years. Although I don't take drugs, I cultivate alternate states of consciousness through meditation, prayer, and ritual. I've long been a student of depth psychology, which has trained me to be as focused on my soul as my ego. In accordance with current astrological omens, my fellow Cancerian, I urge you to hang out more than usual in the soul's realm during the coming weeks.

♌ **LEO** (July 23–Aug. 22): Can I talk you into being more tender and open-hearted toward the people who care for you? I don't mean to imply that you are currently too hard and closed. But all of us can benefit from enhancing our receptivity, and the coming weeks will be prime time for you Leos to do just that. I think you'll find it easier than usual to deepen your listening skills and intensify your sensitivity. You'll have an acute intuitive grasp of the fact that you can earn yourself huge blessings by expressing love and compassion in very practical ways.

♍ **VIRGO** (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): All of us are in service to someone or something—to certain people or ideas or situations. We provide them with help or energy or mirroring or love. We are dutiful in attending to their needs and wants. For some of us, our service feels like a burden. It's grating or humbling or inconvenient, or all of the above. For others of us, being of service is fulfilling, even joyful. We find a rich sense of purpose in our devotion to a higher cause or deeper calling beyond our selfish concerns. Among the 12 signs of the zodiac, you Virgos are more likely than most to carry out the latter kind of service. I bring these thoughts to your attention because the coming weeks will be an excellent time to re-evaluate, reconfigure, and reinvigorate your own service.

♎ **LIBRA** (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): Author David Markson imagined what it would be like to write a novel that lacked conflicts or confrontations—in other words, a novel unlike any ever created. Libran author Ursula Le Guin also fantasized about stories with plots that weren't driven by strife and struggle. Since many of us are addicted to entertainment that depends on discord to be interesting, we might find it hard to believe Markson's and Le Guin's dream would ever happen. But I'm pleased to inform you, Libra, that your life in the coming weeks may be exactly like that: a fascinating adventure with few hassles and wrangles.

♏ **SCORPIO** (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): According to Scorpio painter Georgia O'Keeffe, success is irrelevant. The most crucial life-long effort that anyone can be devoted to is "making your unknown known." Did she mean making your unknown known to yourself? Or making your unknown known to other people? Or both? According to my analysis of the astrological omens, the coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to do both. So I hope you will tease out your best and biggest mysteries from their hiding places. Give them expression.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): You Sagittarians have a talent for burning bridges that really do need to be burned. Your intuition often guides you to assess when the time is ripe to withdraw from connections that no longer benefit you. On the other hand, you sometimes burn bridges prematurely. You decide that they are in such disrepair that they're of no use to you, even though it might serve your ultimate interests to fix them. I offer these thoughts as a preface for my advice: 1. Refurbish rather than burn a certain bridge you're a bit disenchanted with. 2. Build at least one new bridge that will be valuable in the future.

♑ **CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): The shape of the planets' orbits around the sun is elliptical, not circular. Capricorn astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) was the first person to figure this out. He didn't like it. He really wanted the orbits to be circular. That would have been more satisfying to his aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities. Explaining the arduous labor he did to arrive at his conclusion, he wrote, "Take pity on me, for I have repeated these calculations 70 times." In the big picture of our understanding of the universe, of course, his discovery was felicitous. It's not a problem that the orbits are elliptical, merely the truth. In the coming weeks, Capricorn, I foresee you engaging in a process that's metaphorically comparable to Kepler's. Hard work will yield useful, if unexpected results.

♒ **AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): Please don't imitate or repeat yourself in the coming weeks. Refrain from relying on formulas that have worked for you before. Resolve to either ignore or rebel against your past as you dream up fresh gambits and adventures. Treat your whole life like an improvisatory game that has just one purpose: to attract and stir up useful novelty. If you do these things, Aquarius, I can practically guarantee that you will win the game.

♓ **PISCES** (Feb. 19–March 20): Poet Robert Bly believes that each of us has a special genius, and the key to understanding and fully activating that genius is in our core wound. In other words, the part of us that got hurt the worst is potentially the generative source of the best gifts we have to give. Do you know where that is in yourself: the wound that could be the source of your blessing? Now is a great time to investigate this tantalizing mystery.

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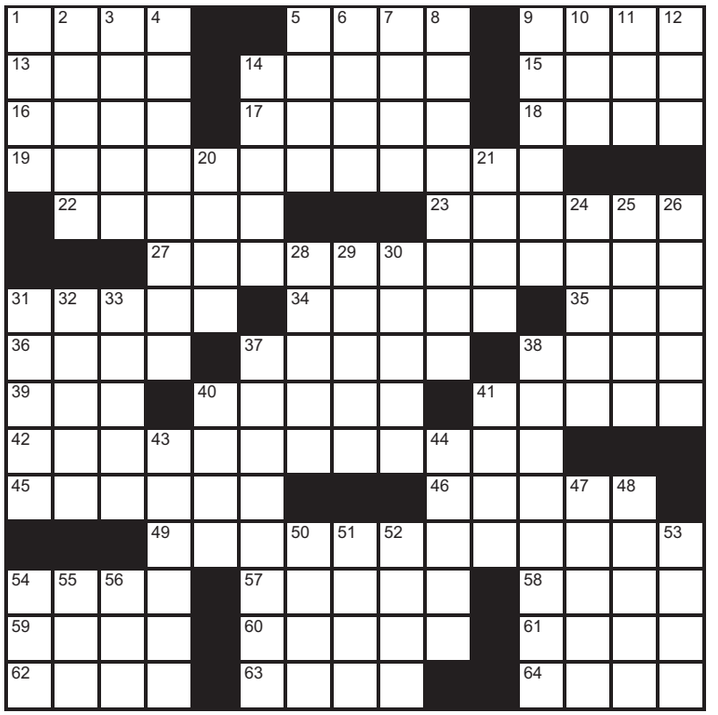

ET TU?

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

1 Newsman Smith
5 Gentle touches
9 Largest island of the Tuscan Archipelago
13 Japan's Prime Minister during WWII
14 Get ready to glow while lifting
15 Switch rival
16 Mindless copier
17 Dish in a lab
18 Drip schmutz everywhere
19 StubHub?
22 Apple Pencils, e.g.
23 Cuthbert of "The Ranch"
27 Jewelry worn by a demonstrator?
31 Actor Adam, or his dad Alan
34 David who played Bond
35 "Just sayin'," initially
36 Classic Valentine's Day gift
37 It'll never hold water
38 Smile from ear to ear
39 "A long, long time ___"
40 Run of the mill
41 Classic office plants
42 Wasp that's fast as lightning?
45 Falling sounds
46 2020 word
49 Where James Harden keeps his money?
54 "Grand Ole'" performance hall
57 Hooting baby
58 Double negative?
59 It's quite a long time
60 Casino tools
61 Meat stamp letters
62 Dino with arms only one meter long
63 Adam's grandson
64 Mic check

Down

1 "Do it now!"
2 Kachina creators
3 Toss out
4 Toon with a stutter
5 See 55-Down
6 Resort in Utah's Wasatch Mountains
7 "Hamilton" antagonist
8 "BlacKkKlansman" Oscar-winner
9 Very rare
10 Corp. raider's takeover
11 Guitarist Scaggs
12 Chop
14 "___ Nerve" (Maria Gainza novel)
20 Hilderbrand nicknamed "Queen of the Beach Read"
21 Musk who founded The Boring Company
24 6-Down habitué
25 Muscular stud
26 Bohr subject
28 Stuffed turnover
29 Line sung after "chicks," say
30 Two-in-one item that was high tech in the '90s
31 Keffiyeh wearers
32 Equip for use
33 Grassy hill
37 A perfect one is 1600
38 Fruit of an Asiatic palm tree
40 Ex-presidential candidate who was "just born to be in it" (um...)
41 Bandleader Kuti
43 Adam's apple spot
44 Lizards in witches brews
47 "Almost!"
48 Pours drinks, e.g.
50 Kevin who wrote "Crazy Rich Asians"
51 Nevada county or its seat
52 Workout tops
53 Exactly
54 Cereal grain
55 With 5-Down, spending allowance
56 Spreadable eggs

Last Week's Answer

B	E	B	O	P		A	J	A	X		A	G	O	G
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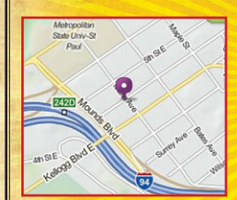

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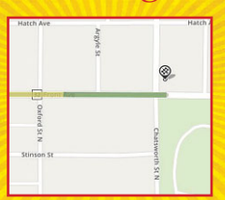

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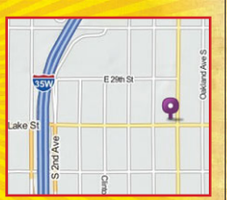

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Can I politely back out of a threesome?

Dan Savage

I'm a 33-year-old woman in a relationship with a 43-year-old man whose fantasy is to have a threesome with another man. He enjoys watching me have sex with other men and intermittently fucking me. But he mostly likes to watch me get fucked. Recently, we met up with a man for the first time. I don't think it went well.

My boyfriend and I have had conversations about my fear of contracting an STI. Before the threesome, I explained to my boyfriend and the other guy that condoms were required. They agreed. But when he put a condom on, he went flaccid. He would try to fuck me, but it just didn't work. He would take the condom off, jerk off, get semi-hard, put a condom back on, go completely soft again. Even when I sucked the guy's dick: nothing. My boyfriend, who was observing and jerking off, suggested we forget condoms. I said no and restated my boundary. The guy still couldn't get it up, hopped out of bed, and started getting dressed. My boyfriend offered to let the guy cream pie me if he would stay. I said fuck no and the guy left. He didn't even say bye.

I don't think my boundary should be compromised because a stranger can't get it up. My boyfriend keeps suggesting we meet up with this guy again so he can "get closure." He really wants to watch this guy at least come on me. My boyfriend and this guy have since texted about him fucking me again. I'm all for being GGG, but... what the fuck?

I thought this guy was kind of an asshole. My boyfriend was definitely an asshole. My questions are: If I'm uncomfortable during a threesome, how do I politely call it off? I don't want to embarrass anyone, but this went on for two hours. How do I terminate a threesome without sounding like a bitch?

THREESOME OBVIOUSLY DRIED UP MY PUSSY

To politely call off a threesome, TODUMP, all you gotta say is, "Hey, this isn't working for me—let's take a rain check." Say it while pulling up your pants and use your "final answer" voice.

The "rain check" doesn't have to be sincere. It can be, but it's mostly a nice, face-saving, ego-sparing way to ease someone out of your pants/bed/playroom/apartment. If anyone starts arguing—your third or your primary partner—don't worry about being polite. Go ahead and be a bitch: "This is over, you/they need to go, rain check rescinded, asshole/assholes."

And while we're on the subject of terminating things with assholes, TODUMP, you need to dump your shitty fucking boyfriend immediately—and there's no need to be polite about it. He tried to coerce you into having sex without condoms when he knew you didn't want to. Attempting to reopen negotiations about your stated boundaries once the threesome was underway was a violation of your consent. And your boyfriend knew you wouldn't want to embarrass anyone and maliciously attempted to weaponize your consideration for other people's feelings against you! He was hoping you wouldn't embarrass him by refusing to have sex without condoms after he "offered" to let this guy cream pie you (come inside you) to get him to stay! He was hoping you'd rather risk an STI than risk embarrassing or contradicting him! On top of that, he spoke to this guy like it was up to them what happened next, like you were a Fleshlight or tube sock!

Now your asshole boyfriend is pressuring you to get back together with a guy who couldn't get it up with a condom on when he knows you don't want to have sex without condoms? A guy who couldn't be bothered to say goodbye after you sucked his fucking dick?

This relationship should have been over the moment your boyfriend made it clear some stranger's dick was more important than your health, safety, and boundaries. He attempted to barter away your boundaries, proving he can't be trusted and you aren't safe with him, alone or with a third.

DTMFA.

This is every woman's nightmare scenario when it comes to cuckolding or hotwifing—that her partner will pressure her to do things she doesn't want to do. Guys like your boyfriend don't deserve to have GGG girlfriends; they ruin things for other wannabe cucks, stags, and hot husbands.

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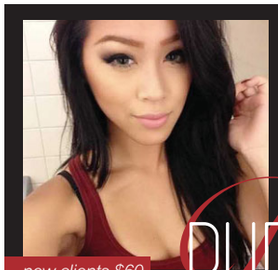

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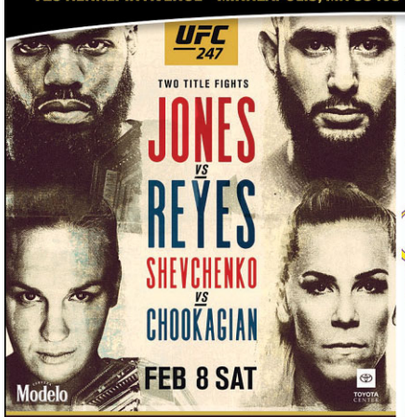

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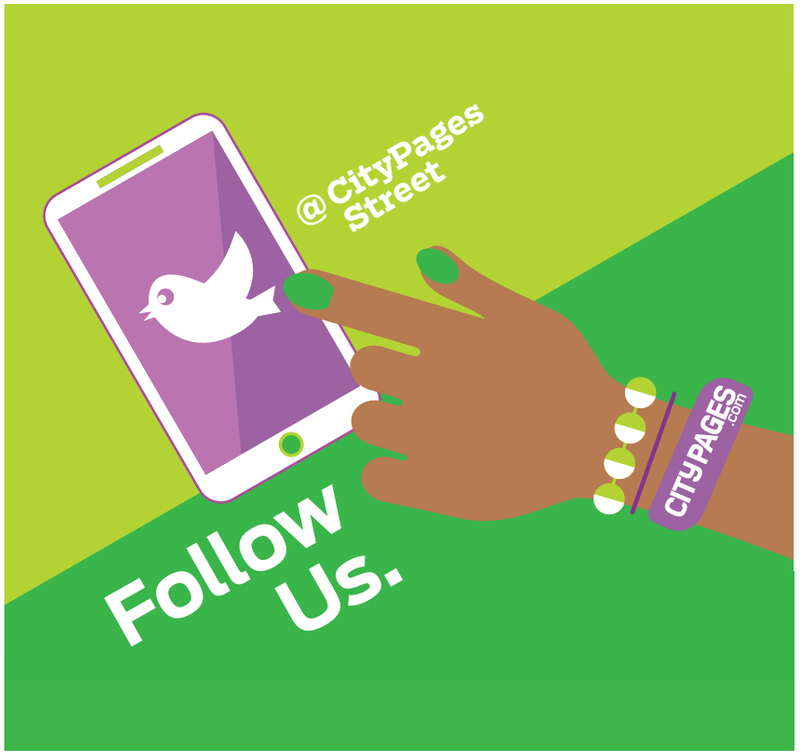

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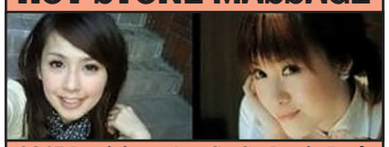
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